

The Heart of Christianity

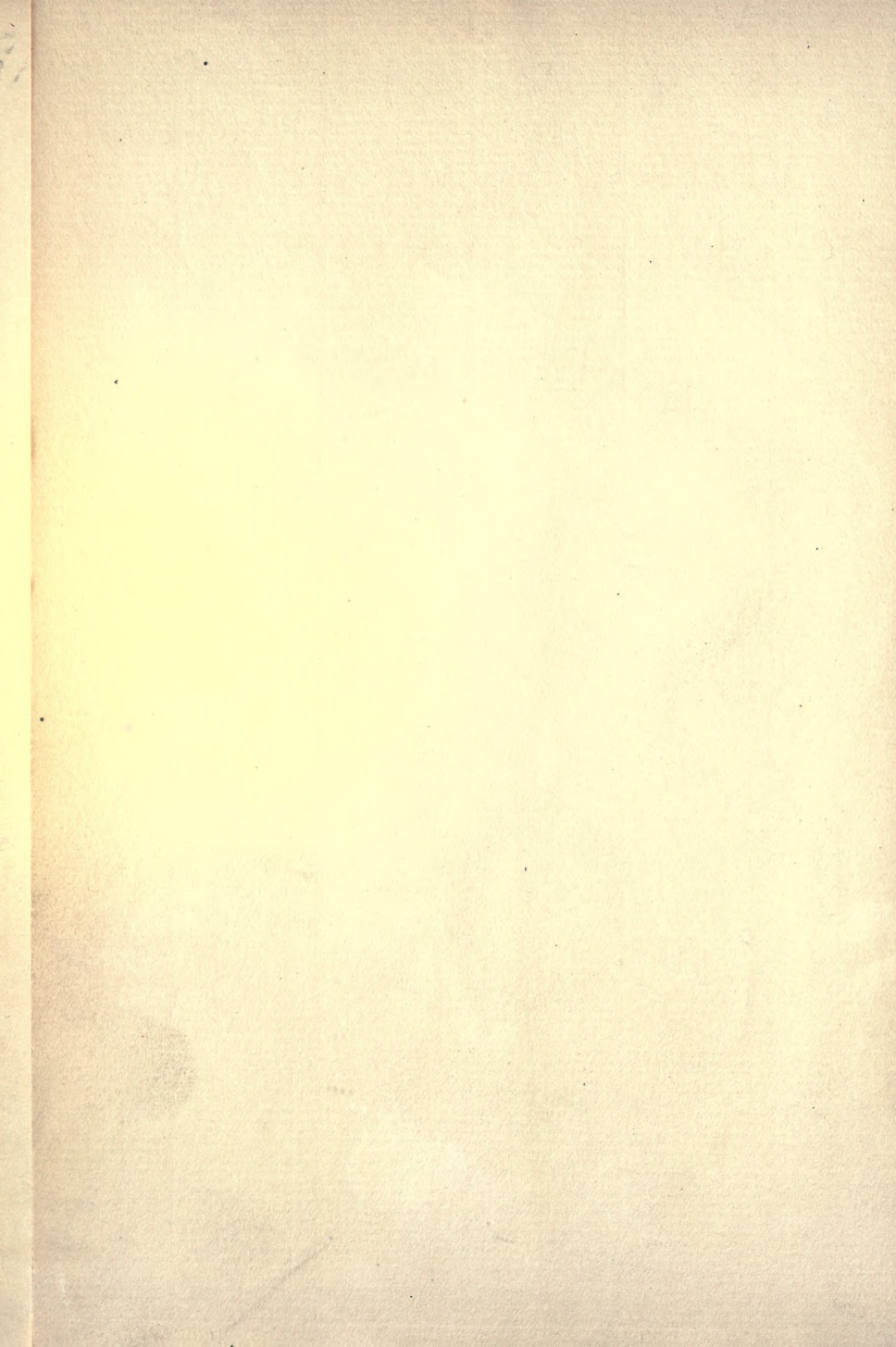


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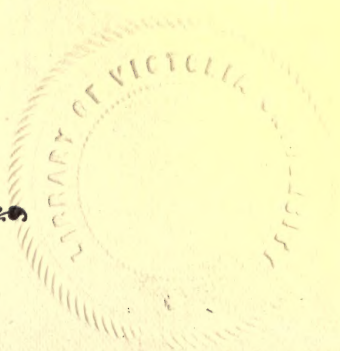
THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY

By

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"THE PATH OF WEALTH," "DISCIPLING THE
NATIONS," ETC.



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PREFACE.

SOME devout Christian scholars who have read this book in manuscript, have suggested that I ought to have qualified, more fully, its leading propositions.

For example, in the teaching that the Holy Spirit is the guide of the Christian, it is suggested that, I lay myself open to the suspicion that I undervalue the Church and the Bible, or at least, that I see antagonism between the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and the Church and the Bible on the other.

As to the latter, I am well satisfied that there can be no antagonism or contradiction between the truth of the Bible and the leadings of the Holy Spirit. The one must harmonize with the other. God can never contradict Himself although sometimes He may *appear* to do so.

Then as to the Church. It was doubtless established by Jesus Christ, for all time, for the fellowship of His disciples and for the organized preaching of His gospel. It is a

Holy Divine-human institution, and has conferred unspeakable blessings upon the world, and is being used by God at this time, as never before, in extending the Kingdom of God in the earth, but it is not infallible.

What is herein taught is that when the Bible or the Church is held up as an object of worship, or anything approaching that : or as taking the place of the Holy Spirit as *the* guide of the Christian, then it is made to serve the very contrary purpose for which it was intended. The Bible and the Church are meant to bring humanity to the Holy Spirit to be guided by Him. To reverse this process is idolatry.

But it is said that, even admitting this, have not the evils, arising from taking the Holy Spirit as guide, been as great as the evils I have pointed out? If I had thought so this book would never have been written. The world has produced comparatively few fanatics. A fanatic has always been such a rare and singular person, that he has attracted more notice than his importance justified.

It must, however, be admitted that some practical evils have resulted from men and

movements, devoted to the spread of the doctrine of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This only illustrates that the higher and more important the truth, the greater the danger of its misuse. The greatest spiritual truths are on the border line of fanaticism and some people step over.

It is, however, the same in the material world. The greater the power the more the danger. The sharper the knife the greater the risk in its use. Learning and unusual ability are great blessings, but how many there are who make these qualities a great curse! However, the misuse of these powers is not only exceptional, but also avoidable, and only serves to emphasize how great blessings these powers and gifts are to humanity as a whole.

I have not pointed out in the following pages the *dangers* of the doctrine of absolute Divine Guidance, but its *truth and blessedness*, and there are no dangers to one who really commits his cause to the Unseen. On the other hand, there is not only grave danger in the popular spiritual evils, which this book combats, but actual and necessary spiritual disaster.

My attention is also called to the fact that I have not been as emphatic in calling attention to the tendency of doing wrong and thinking it right, as I have to the tendency of doing right and thinking it wrong. In answer to this, I need only say that, my book is written for the God-fearing and conscientious. My mission is to those who constantly desire to do the will of God: to remind them that the yoke of Jesus is easy and His burden light: to relieve them, from man-made laws, and from the accusations of the Devil: to dig away from their souls the theological rubbish concerning sin, under which they are groaning, and to relieve them from that sum total of all heresies, that God is a hard master and nobody can perfectly do His will, not even with the aid of Almighty power.

I do not think there is anything in my argument that will lead any man to do wrong and persuade himself he is doing right, even though I have not devoted it to those who desire to get an excuse for wrong-doing. There is no doubt a class of persons who cling to the Church and make a profession of religion and live in sin. Some of them

it may be, by constantly resisting the voice of God in their souls, have deluded themselves into the belief that wrong is right, and are living in carnal security: but my present message is not for this class, and I should be sorry to think that this book will be any comfort to such persons, but, on the contrary, will have a tendency to arouse them from their spiritual delusion.

In conclusion, I ask for a sympathetic reading of what I have written and for an effort to get at my actual thought before antagonizing it, for it will be easy to give to my words a meaning not intended. If I have not made some blunders in my reasoning upon so great a theme it will be a surprise to me, but I believe in the main, my message is from God; and I can truthfully say that my chief desire is to help those to accomplish their purpose who would live to do the will of God on the earth as the Angels do it in Heaven.

T. S. LINS COTT.

THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERY OF SIN.

Sin and its solution.—Sin the result of freedom and ignorance.—Sin in some senses a necessity.—Sin no surprise to God.—God not outwitted by the Devil.—God knew what was going to happen.—God foresaw in outline the history of the race.—The world is the legitimate and logical out-working of God's purposes.—God making man with moral, animal and spiritual nature meant what we call sin.—Jesus is God's provision for the cure of sin.—“Sin is that thing which God doth hate.”

The existence of sin has always been regarded as a mystery, and generally supposed to be a mystery without a solution. That it is a mystery which cannot be solved I am inclined to doubt. That sin and consequent suffering exist in beings created by a holy God, is not easy of explanation, but it is easier to conceive of than it is to conceive of the opposite, that is, intelligent beings

starting their career in ignorance and living without sin.

The mystery of sin is like some other mysteries; for example, illimitable space is almost unthinkable, but the opposite thought or limited space, is quite unthinkable.

Sin is one of the sad, but natural results of freedom and ignorance. If sin is the transgression of law, and if the subjects of the law are ignorant of its benefits and have to learn by experience its penalties, and if sin appears to the senses as desirable, it seems almost, if not quite, necessary that all must be law-breakers in order to learn how to be law-keepers. Whatever may be its full meaning, it is said of Jesus in Holy Writ, that "Though He were a Son yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."

Concerning the mystery of sin, I must believe that the sin of mankind did not surprise God, nor was it other than He could naturally expect, and I had almost said that, it was none other than the natural outcome of His own holy plans and purposes. It

seems to me to be indescribably foolish, not to say dishonoring to God, to suppose as some seem to do, that the Devil in the garden of Eden, outwitted God, and upset His plans. I would much rather believe that the Devil was but an instrument in the hands of God in carrying out the Divine plans, notwithstanding that this theory is also open to objections.

Whether the story of the fall, as told in Genesis, is historical or simply a parable illustrating the origin of sin, it can only be logically explained on the supposition that *God knew what was going to happen*, and that He planned for what did happen, and took the wisest way to establish a righteousness which should be worked out by experience, and finally develop a race which would learn evil from good, and by deliberate choice cleave to the good and refuse the evil.

Not only does this seem to be reasonable when we think of the nature of God, the nature of man, and the results aimed at, but it appears to me not to be out of harmony with the Scriptures. It is apparent to all readers of the Bible, that it speaks of two

laws, the one making for evil and the other making for good, and we all know as a matter of fact that, we are, from the dawn of consciousness, environed by these two laws; that life is a constant battle or struggle with them. It seems that if God planned for the temptation and knew in advance of the fall in Eden, that He also planned for the wisdom which comes through the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, supplemented by experience and suffering to incline the heart of man to finally resist and hate evil and to learn and love to do well.

It is more than hinted at in the Scriptures that *God foresaw, at least in outline, the history of the race*, that He looked down the ages, at the war between sin and holiness, between right and wrong, between law and lawlessness, between wisdom and folly, which would inevitably result from His creation of man, and that He made provision in advance for the great moral conflict and for the final overthrow of sin and the establishment of righteousness. What else does the prophetic statement in Genesis mean, that "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head" or the historic statement

in Revelations, concerning the "Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world."

Whether we can explain it or not, it must be that the world has been, is, and will be, the legitimate and logical working out of God's purposes. It must be folly to suppose, that Satan overthrew God's plans, or that chance or circumstances or man's choice, or any other power misdirected the stream of humanity, whose source is the very heart of the Eternal.

When God made man with moral, animal and spiritual nature, He knew that it meant conflict which would result in what we call sin, but He made provision in Jesus Christ by which man may learn to take into his nature the power of God, if not God Himself, and thus be more than a match for the subtle temptations of that trinity of evil forces, known as "sin, the flesh and the Devil." And it can therefore be said, of all who take God's provision for the cure of sin, "that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

Nor is there anything in the views now expressed which makes God responsible for

sin in the sense of approving sin or condoning it, "For sin is that thing which God doth hate."

"Man-like it is to fall into sin,
Fiend-like it is to dwell therein,
Christ-like it is, for sin to grieve,
God-like it is all sin to leave."

CHAPTER II.

WHAT IS SIN?

The Bible does not give a formal definition of sin.—Sin is lawlessness.—Sin is also a condition.—The Moral turpitude of different kinds of sin.—Wilful sins.—Moral values determined by motives and not actions.—The telling of a thing not true to facts not necessarily a lie.—Actions may be right under one circumstance and wrong under another.—There can be no sin without sinful intent.—Sins incur varying degrees of guilt.—The power of heredity.—We inherit moral as well as physical resemblances.—Heredity modified by environment.—Environment another factor in inciting to sin.—Involuntary sins.—Converted people do not commit wilful sin.—To speak of a sinning saint is as absurd as to speak of a round square.—Involuntary acts that are wrong ought not to be called sins.—Acts prompted by love are never sinful.

As to what sin is, it seems to be a question more easily asked than answered. The Bible, not being a formal system of theology, does not give a full or specific, or philosophical definition of sin, in a few words, and we have to take what it says and make our own definition. I. John 3:4, states, "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness," and in the

fifth chapter and seventeenth verse, it is stated that "All unrighteousness is sin."

The first quotation refers to the verb or the outward act of sin and perhaps the second includes also the noun or the state of sin. In the first chapter of the same epistle, verses eight to ten, it is stated, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

This is clearly a reference to the state of sin, or depravity, which is a moral disease inherent in mankind, and also to the act of sinning, and we are warned against the folly of denying either the one or the other, and are further told that God can heal the disease of sin and forgive the sinner. I will consider in the first place *what* the act of sin is.

The act of sin or sinning. Protestants in their teaching, so far as I have been able to observe, have a tendency to make but little or no distinction, between the moral

turpitude of different kinds of sins, and yet it is of vital importance that this distinction should be observed, as in blameworthiness sins vary all the way from slight breaches of the law deserving but little censure, up to mortal sins for which in the nature of things there is no forgiveness. The Bible in many instances refers to sinning a great sin as distinguished from a slight or a venial sin. John says (I. John 5: 16, 17), "If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request."

Bearing in mind then that there are sins and sins, we will pursue our investigation. Perhaps for the purpose of this discussion, we had better confine ourselves to the consideration of Wilful Sins and Involuntary Sins.

Wilful Sins. In examining wilful sins, we see at once that such sins are not necessarily constituted by outward actions. Moral values are determined by motives and not by actions, for there is no necessary moral quality in any action. This is such a simple

proposition that it seems unnecessary to argue it and yet it may be well to illustrate the truth of the statement.

For example, a lie is not necessarily constituted by telling that which is not according to the facts ; for if one tells that which is not according to facts, but believes it is so, he is truthful ; while if one tells that which is according to fact, and thinks he is misrepresenting the fact, he is a liar. It is the motive, in this and in every case, which gives moral value to actions.

Then again, many outward actions are wrong under one circumstance and right under another. To kill a man may be highly meritorious, or it may be a foul murder, the moral quality of the action being differentiated according to the circumstances. The act which constitutes one of the vilest sins under certain conditions is under other conditions free from all blame, being both highly honorable and quite necessary. It follows from these observations that in order to be guilty of a wilful sin, there must be plan and purpose to sin, for in the absence of the intent to sin the act would either be a result of ignorance or be

involuntary, and hence deserving of no blame, unless the ignorance itself were a guilty ignorance.

But even when a wilful sin has been committed by a number of persons through the very same act, the degree of guilt incurred may vary with each individual. There are several factors which may tend to bring about this varying result. There is that mysterious power known as heredity, which enters into the problem. There comes down the ages in each family peculiar tendencies to particular actions and habits. Parents receive these tendencies from their parents and then transmit them in turn to their children. Just as surely as children resemble their parents or forefathers in physical appearance, so surely do they take on their mental, moral and spiritual tendencies. This resemblance and these transmitted tendencies vary and are modified by environment, and especially by the miraculous power of the grace of God ; but there is not one of us whose life and habits and tendencies, have not been modified by the qualities which we were born with, and for which, whether for weal or for woe, we are in no way responsible.

Suppose it is the sin of drunkenness, which we are considering ; we can easily see that more blame must be meted out to some drunkards than to others. Some have been born with the poisonous virus in their veins ; have nursed it in their mother's milk, and have had early and easy access to the drink, and as a natural result are inebriates. They are afflicted with an hereditary disease—a disease just as real as the smallpox, and as such they should be treated by the community. God surely metes out the blame to such, according to His unerring justice, and it seems to me He cannot put them in the same class as other drunkards who have become so by their own deliberate choice.

As we shall see more fully later, heredity in the case of a great many sinners, is a factor in the temptations which result in wilful sin, and necessarily must be taken into account by God when He pronounces on the degree of guilt to be accorded to such sinners.

Environment is another powerful factor in inciting to wilful sin, and it also modifies the guilt of the same sinful acts in different persons. Many a sin is committed through the evil influence of a strong and wicked will in

another, or by other evil influences, that never would have been committed in the absence of such temptations. For example, Herod Antipas was of course verily guilty of the murder of John the Baptist, but a deeper degree of guilt would attach to that crime if he had not been trapped into making a blind promise to the daughter of Herodias, the keeping of which involved the beheading of John much against the king's personal wish. Herodias was the more guilty of the two, in this cold-blooded transaction. Over against this event, we may put as a crime without any extenuating circumstances, the murder of the innocents, in Bethlehem by Herod the Great. This was a wholesale slaughter of innocent children to which he was impelled by no person but his own cruel jealous self.

The least imaginative of us can without difficulty, recall events which illustrate how environment modifies to a greater or less degree, the guilt of the bad deeds to which men have been incited. Many a wrecked life would have been a saved and a successful life but for evil influences and associations. On the other hand, many a good man is in-

debted for his character to the influence of good people and other favorable surroundings.

But, as just stated in case of Herod the Great, many sin deliberately, and of malice aforethought, and these incur the deepest degree of guilt that attaches to wilful sin.

Involuntary Sins. I take it that converted people do not commit wilful sins. John says (I. John 3:9), "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." I see no difficulty in this statement as some do, for it simply affirms a self-evident proposition. It is a moral statement of the same nature as the geometrical statements would be, that a triangle cannot be a square, and a circle cannot be an ellipse. Or it is like another moral statement, that an honest man cannot be a thief, nor can a truthful man be a liar. If indeed a man who always had been honest, should steal, he would then cease to be honest, as it is impossible to be an honest man and a thief at the same time. And it is possible for one who had been

noted for his truthfulness to cease to be truthful; but it is impossible to be truthful and a liar at one and the same time.

To speak of a sinning saint, is as absurd as to speak of a round square, or hot ice, or to use any other naturally contradictory term.

People who wilfully sin either never have been born again or else, like Lucifer, they have fallen from their heaven of holiness and light. But while it is impossible for the children of God to wilfully sin, except they fall from grace; yet all of us who are the children of God know from sad experience, that we have often been overtaken with faults and have done involuntarily many things which we wish we had not done. Without the consent of our wills we think things, say things, and sometimes do things, that fall very far short of the standard we have set ourselves of holy living, and high thinking. Animal passion to which all healthy persons are subject, comes in for a large share of these apparent lapses from pure thoughts and holy desires which we believe should fill the heart and mind of a child of God. Bad health in some overclouds the sunshine of

the soul and produces feelings out of harmony with our thoughts of a holy life. Overwrought nerves, worry and excitement, business troubles, family cares, the temptations of life, to all of which are generally added the temptations of the Devil, combine to produce what may be called involuntary sin for which the child of God often repents in sackcloth and ashes and in the agony of his soul cries out with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"

It is difficult to give to this condition or experience its true moral value, for while on the one hand, I would not like to say that none who go through this experience ever do grieve God by the involuntary acts I have pictured, yet on the other hand, for the most part, I cannot believe that such acts in themselves are any offence to God whatsoever, and if so *they ought not to be called sins*. The large majority, however, of these devout souls take to themselves condemnation, when God does not condemn them and thus lose their grip of faith on God.

In so far as Christians are worldly and allow the altar fires of love in their hearts

to burn low, and thus actually sin and fall from grace, and live a life of sinning and repenting, then of course they are guilty for the acts which we call, for the want of a better name, involuntary sin. But when God is in all a man's thoughts, when the great desire of his heart is to please God, when he not only never plans to sin but the very thought of sin is repugnant to him, then all such involuntary acts, as I have attempted to describe, are never sinful acts, and God takes no more notice of them in the way of blame, than does the mother blame her little child who with arms around her mother's neck, can only lisp, "mudder, I love oo," when she ought to have said to be strictly correct, "mother, I love you." She tried to speak correctly but failed, but the mother enjoyed the caress and drank in the sweet nectar of the child's love, just as much as if it had been spoken in the most faultless English. I think the Heavenly Father does the same, for if He knows we love Him truly and delight to please Him, then all the rest of our acts are a delight to Him because they all spring from love.

CHAPTER III.

SIN AS A STATE OR CONDITION.

Human nature in infancy not free from a tendency to sin.—
A child prone to go morally wrong.—Children not guilty
for the sins of Adam.—Children do suffer for the sins of
their parents.—Such suffering vicarious not punitive.—
Children are innocent in fact.—Natural depravity not
guilt.—God looks upon natural depravity with pity and
not anger.

WITHOUT any desire to defend one creed
or another, I must conclude from my ob-
servation that human nature is not, in its
beginning or infancy, pure or free from a
taint or tendency to sin. The theory that
the mind or soul of a child may be repre-
sented by a sheet of white paper, with noth-
ing written upon it, either good or bad, is
I fear, not according to actual fact. Ex-
perience teaches that *a child left to itself, is
prone to go morally wrong*, and that one of
the chief duties of a parent or teacher is to
teach the child the harmful nature of wrong
actions and to lead it to God to have this

sinning tendency reversed. The familiar couplet, whether historically true or not, is certainly true to human experience, that,

“ We sprang from the man whose guilty fall,
Corrupts our race and taints us all.”

This natural condition is exemplified in two ways, that is, we find in children, at adolescence and at times earlier, a natural tendency to shun God and a desire for that which is sinful. My purpose will not permit of any extended elaboration of these two tendencies, nor indeed is it necessary, as I think from common observation the truth of my statement is apparent. Who has not observed that the germs of what have been called the seven deadly sins ; pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth, appear to be in every normal and healthy child ?

Before leaving this phase of the subject I must make two statements concerning the guilt or blameworthiness of children in this condition.

First I must *protest against the theory* which is taught in some of the creeds *that children are guilty for the sin of Adam.*

I presume no person outside of a lunatic asylum would advocate such a theory to-day, but it has been held in the past by great men in the Church, and growing out of it the horrible statement has been made, that "There are infants in hell a span long." But over against our horror for such an unjust doctrine, that of making a child responsible for the sins of Adam, we must admit the fact, that children certainly do suffer in this life for the sins of their parents. "The parents have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," or in sober fact, parents sin and contract both physical and moral diseases which they transmit to their children. The suffering thus entailed, however, cannot be in the nature of punishment, indeed, it is nothing more or less than vicarious suffering; these children bear the sins of their parents, and it would seem to me to be thus arranged by the good God as a warning against the terrible consequences of sin. It must be, that God, either in time or eternity, gives to such sufferers a compensation equal to the suffering thus borne by them for the sins of others.

The second remark I would make on this question is that *children are innocent in fact*, and therefore in the eyes of God, notwithstanding that they are the offspring of sinners and that they have inherited the evil consequence of the sins of their parents. I need quote but one authority to stop all argument on this subject, for did not the Master say, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven"? Indeed He puts children as the standard of character, and their condition, the condition for salvation, saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Now if it be granted that children are innocent in the eyes of God, it logically follows that sin as a state or condition, variously known as *birth sin, or natural depravity*, or the disease of sin with which children are born,—*has no necessary moral quality*. As well may we predicate moral quality of a clubfoot with which a child is born as to do so of any inherited quality of mind, body or spirit, which such child may possess.

The fact that children are born with an

evil inheritance in their own natures, provokes in God the profoundest pity and love, as far removed from blame as the mother's fond love for the crippled child is from hatred.

The temptation to prolong the discussion on this phase of the subject is strong, for what has already been said is but the gateway to a very large and inviting field, but the temptation must be resisted as other important phases of the subject must be referred to.

CHAPTER IV.

GOD'S CURE FOR SIN.

God's cure for sin is God.—The root of sin is rebellion against God.—When the sinner turns to God his sin is cured.—Usually there are many steps to take before reaching God.—Belief in Jesus.—Son of God manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil.—There is no correct theory of the atonement.—The Sacrificial, the Remedial, and the Moral Influence theories are each faulty.—Jesus gave no theory of atonement.—The New Testament statement of the mission of Jesus is simple.—The Commercial theory of the atonement.—The Universalists' and the Calvinists' theories of the atonement.—Popular theory of the atonement not logical.—The atonement not the payment of a debt.—God was never angry with Jesus.—The atonement not the *cause* but the *effect* of God's love.—God's cure for sin is in Jesus.—Union with God and with Jesus the one effectual remedy for sin.

IF I were asked for the shortest answer I could give to the important question, "What is God's cure for sin," I would say, that *God's cure for sin is God himself*. Sin is dethroning God from the soul, while holiness is enthroning Him. The root of sin is rebellion against God, and turning Him out of the human temple; while the beginning and

the end of righteousness is a humble acceptance of the rule of God and placing Him in the heart,—in the centre of the will and the affections and crowning Him Lord of all. When the sinner thus turns to God his sin is cured and his iniquity is purged.

This may appear to be putting salvation from sin in a new way, but in the last analysis this is the answer of the Bible, and this is the pith or the sum and substance of the teaching of Jesus. But usually there are many steps to take before this final step can be taken, and there are many conditions to meet before the sinner is ready or able to come back to God, while many influences appear to be necessary to incline him to do so. But the question as to God's cure for sin may be said to have a Godward and a man-ward answer.

The Godward answer to this question. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life," is a statement which clearly suggests God's method of curing sin, and the same writer of the above (I. John 3: 5-9) also states, "And ye know that He was manifested to take away

sins ; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither knoweth Him. My little children, let no man lead you astray : he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous : he that doeth sin is of the Devil ; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed abideth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."

I do not think in the entire range of literature language can be found which more perspicuously states its subject matter. John doubtless means what he says and he states it in a way which is unmistakably clear.

I have never heard or read a clear and logical theory of the atonement of Jesus, and I doubt if one can be given. I think I have examined most of the human theories that have been advocated, but not one of them to my thinking will stand the test of either reason or Scripture.

The three main theories of the atonement

may be summarized as (1) The Sacrificial, (2) The Remedial, and (3) The Moral Influence Theory. Thirty years ago I heard these theories debated by men of great ability before some of the most cultured audiences in London, England, and there always seemed to me to be a lack in each of them. None of them in my estimation can square itself with the Scriptures. Each attributes to God and to Jesus, qualities which they do not possess. No doubt there is truth in each theory, but not all the truth, and one turns to the story as told in the New Testament, with great relief ; but the writers of the New Testament make no attempt to give a theory, they simply state a fact. Jesus gave no theory of atonement, but stated clearly what His mission was.

I most reverently and unequivocally accept the statement of the New Testament, that God gave His son Jesus Christ to the world to save the world ; that His life and teaching and suffering and death and resurrection and ascension, in some way, wrought out the at-one-ment of the world with God ; that through this great atonement rebels, on laying down their arms, are taken back

by God, that the moral and spiritually diseased who desire it, are cured of their maladies, that bad men may be transformed into good men and sinners born again into saints.

The Commercial theory of the atonement growing out of the sacrificial theory, whether as interpreted by Universalists or old school Calvinists, seems to me to be dishonoring to God and hurtful to man. The Universalist theory is, or at least was, that Jesus died for the world, that He paid the debt which the world owed to God, and that therefore the whole world will be saved. The Calvinistic theory in like manner, is that Jesus died for the elect, and made full recompense to God for their sins, and as a consequence all the elect will be saved. Now it must be said that both of these theories are logical if their premises are correct, or if in a commercial sense Jesus actually paid a debt. But the premises are clearly wrong, for Jesus did not in a commercial sense pay a debt, else God would have nothing to forgive.

But the popular theory, if indeed it is a theory, has not even the poor virtue of being logical, for while it claims that Jesus paid

the debt which sinners owe to God, it also claims that God will collect that debt from the sinner unless he repents. This represents God as being paid twice for the same debt, which would appear to be unfair. To teach that the atonement is the payment of a debt, except in a poetic or in an allegorical way, is not scriptural, because it is neither true nor sensible, and the Scriptures are both.

Another outgrowth of this theory in effect, represents God as being angry with Jesus and punishing Him for the sins of the world, whereas God never was angry with Jesus but always well pleased with Him. Then to picture God as unwilling to forgive and being about to punish the sinner with everlasting punishment, until Jesus stayed His avenging hand by His own death, is the grossest caricature and the veriest burlesque upon the Heavenly Father revealed in the Gospels.

The atonement of Jesus is not in any sense the *cause* of God's love for the sinner but it is the *effect* of God's love, which is a very different thing.

“ For God *so loved the world*, that He gave

His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It is such crude views of the plan of salvation as these, which have afforded infidels of the school of Tom Paine, whose chief modern disciples have been Charles Bradlaugh, and Col. Robert Ingersoll, material for their popular denunciations of Christianity. Take away from these men such false views of the atonement of Jesus and they have nothing left upon which to vent their indignation.

The Gospels are at once a record and a picture of God's infinite love, in giving His Son for the salvation of the world, and both commend themselves to our highest conception of what a perfectly wise, and good, and infinitely loving God would do.

Concerning the other two theories of the atonement to which I have referred, namely, the Remedial and the Moral Influence Theory, I have but little to say, as they have but little, if any, direct bearing on my present purpose. I may remark in passing that the Moral Influence Theory is only a part of the truth and therefore I cannot accept it

as a true theory. I believe I am more in sympathy with the Remedial Theory than with any of the others, but so far as I have been able to understand it, it does not furnish solid ground for my feet to walk on and so I pass it by.

I conclude, however, that *God's cure for sin is in Jesus*, because He is the way to the Father, as He is also the truth and the life, and no man cometh to the Father but by Him.

Jesus lived in the heart of God and pleased Him in all things. He knew the profound secret how to live without sin, and the sole purpose He sought to accomplish was to impart that secret to the world. By believing in Him and continuing in His word, we learn the truth and the truth makes us free from sin. We become free from sin as soon as we lose ourselves in God, in answer to Jesus' prayer : "That they all may be one; as 'Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us : And the glory which 'Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them and 'Thou in Me.'" This is God's only plan for the cure of sin,

to be indwelt of God, and to live in God, to become one with God as Jesus was ; then it is consciously true, " That in Him we live, and move, and have our being," and that our " Bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost." These it seems to me are some of the ideas which show the Godward side of the cure of sin.

CHAPTER V.

MAN'S PART IN CURING HIS SIN.

God treats man as an equal.—To be saved from sinning, a man must crave it.—Faith is the only other condition.—Adequate Divine power given to all who accept.—The climax of revelation is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.—The Holy Spirit is a permanent guest.—A man filled with God more than a match for sin.—God expects His children to live without *wilful* sin.—God is the only absolutely perfect being.—The mission of Jesus was to save His people from their sins.—The formation of character the great work of Jesus.—The precepts of the Bible show that God expects His people to be holy.—Two views of the commandments.—God intends His commandments to be kept.—God's commandments are not grievous.—It would be outrageous for a devil to demand the impossible.

GOD treats man as an equal, so far as freedom is concerned, and demands man's co-operation in order that God may make him a new creature, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of God blamelessly, as did Zacharias and Elisabeth.

In order to be saved from committing sin, there must be a desire for such salvation amounting to the paramount craving of a

man's life. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that *hunger and thirst* after righteousness, for *they* shall be filled." He also compared the condition to a man who sold all he had in order to obtain this pearl of great price, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant, seeking goodly pearls; and having found one pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it." A man who would possess God's uttermost salvation from all sin must "Seek it as silver and search for it as hid treasure." There is no doubt at all but what God supplies the power to live free from sin, to all who comply with the two conditions which I have just quoted from Jesus; but without this all consuming desire, on man's part, even God seems powerless to bring about this great result.

The only other condition necessary is what we call faith. That is to say, a man must believe what God has said in this behalf. The precepts of God all demand holiness of heart and life; and the promises of God all suggest or promise that adequate Divine power will be imparted to all who have the necessary desire, so that God's righteous de-

mands may be complied with. Thus "It is not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord." "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy." Even in the Old Testament it is promised to the faithful, that, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul:" and again, "And I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in My statutes and keep Mine ordinances and do them; and they shall be My people and I will be their God."

These promises, are samples of the full salvation promised by God, in the morning twilight of the unfolding of His great plan of redemption from sin, and they but prepare the elect of God for the noontide glory of that wondrous plan as revealed in Jesus, and for the glorious climax of that revelation under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that, on His departure from the earth, He would send the Holy Spirit to

abide forever with the children of God, and that on His advent He was to be to them all they needed to cause them to do the perfect will of God. He was to comfort them, to give them joy, to be power and wisdom and guidance; He was to do more for them than Jesus could do personally. In fact, He was to dwell in the heart of each believer so that every humble follower of Jesus would be man plus the Holy Spirit, for, said Jesus, "He dwelleth with and shall be in you," and Paul said later, "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?"

A man thus indwelt of God, and having at his command all the power of the Infinite, becomes more than a match for sin, were it a hundred times more subtle and powerful than it is. If a man believes God and abandons himself absolutely to the power and keeping of God, resting upon the promises of God in that behalf, he will not be a committer of sin. I do not think, any mere man is equal to living a life free from sin, because countless numbers have tried it and failed; but when we consider that God has undertaken to do this for every one who exercises simple faith in Him, it is a different

question. "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." I conclude then that man's part in the cure of his sin and his sinning, is to receive by faith the Holy Spirit and to walk in Him.

God certainly expects his children to live without wilful sin, and, as I fully believe, to live without doing anything to displease Him. It is human to err, for ignorance is the lot of all mortals, but there is no sin in normal ignorance, although it proves that absolute perfection is an impossibility, but such perfection is not even desirable if it were possible. In fact, God himself is the only absolutely perfect being in the universe, and must always retain that distinction, and from that standpoint (Job 4 : 18), "He putteth no trust in His servants ; and His angels He chargeth with folly," and (Job 15 : 15) "The heavens are not clean in His sight."

I conclude, however, that God expects all his children to live in such a manner that all their thoughts, words and deeds will be well pleasing to Him and from the following considerations.

From the work that Jesus came to do. The Angel said to Joseph, the husband of

Mary the mother of Jesus (Matt. 1 : 21), "And thou shalt call His name Jesus, for it is He that shall save His people from their sins." And John said (I. John 1 : 6, 7) "If, we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth : but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin ;" and again (I. John 3 : 5), "Ye know that He was manifested to take away sins ; and in Him is no sin."

Sin is represented in the Scriptures as bondage, and Jesus said in so regarding it, "Whosoever sinneth is the servant of sin," and "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Paul says (Rom. 8 : 2), "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." He also urges (Eph. 5 : 25), "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the church to Himself a glorious church, not

having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Paul's chief argument in the epistle to the Romans is to make clear the greatness of the sin of mankind and to demonstrate that the mission of Christ was to save mankind from their sins, that is to cure the disease of sin, and to keep them from sinning. I will quote two texts from a great number of the same purport (Rom. 6: 6), "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin;" (v. 22) "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification and the end eternal life." The passages I have quoted are but samples of the many passages which unmistakably state that the mission of Jesus is to save His people from their sins, in the sense of curing them from inward sin, and keeping them from sinning.

But as a matter of fact, this in the last analysis is all that the Bible does teach concerning the mission of Jesus. The almost innumerable blessings which Christ procures for His people, including the taking of

them to heaven, are but incidents in Christ's mission ; but the formation, or the re-creation of character, the changing of sinners to saints, the reclaiming of rebels to be loyal to their King, the turning of the hearts of rebellious sons to obedience to their Father ; *this is the mission* of Jesus, and all other blessings are actually conditional upon this being done.

From the precepts of the Bible I argue that God expects his people to be blameless. (Phil. 2 : 15) "That ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we are seen as lights in the world."

There are two views of God's commandments to which I call attention ; the one is, that they are a standard of perfection, with which we are to measure ourselves in order that we may see how far we are from measuring up to them, and which in fact it is impossible for us ever to measure up to.

The other view is that while God's commandments are the standard of conduct, yet the standard is attainable and the commandments are to be kept ; that they are just and equal, and fair and reasonable, and that

every commandment implies the possibility if its being kept ; and while it is admitted that men have not the necessary natural power to keep them, it is held that God imparts supernatural power to all who will do His will.

It is perhaps unnecessary for me to say that I favor the last mentioned view, for it cannot be that God binds heavy burdens upon weak shoulders, or sets us tasks of impossible performance. To say so, would be little short of blasphemy, if men knew what they were talking about. John states (I. John 5 : 3) "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments ; and His commandments *are not grievous*." But listen to the poetry, the pathos, and the music of these words as they fall from the lips of the Master : "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." How different is this gracious declaration of God's nature and his reasonable demands, from the harsh God of a cruel theology, and the un-

reasonable demands which He is said to make.

God everywhere in the Bible demands holiness of heart and life; the ten commandments are meant to be kept and not to be broken, and every moral and spiritual precept God ever gave He means us to keep and not to break. He says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." God's standard for His people is a glad obedience to His laws, and this is what He expects, and for the accomplishment of which the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer gives adequate power.

It would be outrageous for a Devil, much less for a just and loving God, to impose burdens that He knows cannot be borne, to set us tasks that cannot be performed, or to give us commandments that cannot be kept, and then to punish us for not doing what cannot be done. But such a monstrous belief concerning God, will no longer be held by Christians, when they once see its absurd and anti-Christian character.

CHAPTER VI.

WRONG VIEWS OF SIN.

A standard too high to be attainable is a false standard.—Neither angelic nor intellectual perfection demanded.—Human frailties consistent with living without committing sin.—A negative testimony that God does not keep any of his children without sin is not evidence.—The impossible is often accomplished.—Innocent things are often labeled as sinful.—Some consider animal desire as necessarily sinful.—Some set themselves impossible tasks.—Some consider all doubt concerning what they have been taught as sinful.—The Holy Spirit is the only convincer of sin.—Our unaided judgment not a safe criterion.—We should not take condemnation from a creed.

I CAN only account for the theory that God's laws cannot be kept, and that no person can live without committing sin, from one or all of the following considerations.

This theory may place the standard too high. In effect a standard too high is a standard too low, because it is a false standard. It may be that this standard demands angelic perfection, or intellectual perfection, or freedom from temptation, or perfection of the nerves, or perfection of speech, or perfect

culture in manner, or absence of frailty, or freedom from mistake, or a thousand and one other things, to all of which no human being has ever yet attained, and none of which have any necessary moral or spiritual quality. A Christian may not have attained to any one of these perfections and yet live a life well pleasing to God.

Such a theory must necessarily be advocated by those who have not personally received the power of God which keeps the heart from sin.

It is natural that we judge others by ourselves, and form our doctrines from our experience, and even interpret Scripture by the color of our own spectacles ; but conclusions from such premises are rarely right. A negative testimony in any event is seldom of any use. One positive testimony, from experience, that God saves from sin, is of more value than a thousand opinions based upon a lack of such experience. The Scriptures, Christian biography, and the testimony of the living, backed by the words of Jesus, outweigh all such negative opinions.

Just about the time the experts had theoretically demonstrated, that a ship could not

carry coal enough to steam across the Atlantic, the thing was actually accomplished ; when Morse had constructed the first short telegraph line and claimed he could send messages over it, some with unbelief laughed him to scorn, and others said if done at all, it was done through the instrumentality of evil spirits, but telegraphy was a scientific fact. When Prof. Bell invented the telephone in the city of Brantford, no person believed him sufficiently to advance him money, and he tried to sell for a hundred dollars and failed, what now is worth ten thousand dollars, but the telephone is a great commercial fact. The Pharisees tried to weaken the faith of the man who was born blind, in the power and goodness of Jesus, through whom he had received his sight ; and the man said, " One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." Instances are as numerous almost as the sands upon the seashore, both in mind and matter, that the impossible to the one is the attainment of the other ; that what the majority say cannot be done, is straightway accomplished by more courageous souls, and he is a bold man, or an ignorant man, or both, who

would put any limit upon the possibilities of faith in an Almighty God and loving Father.

Or it may be, that the theory I am combating has a wrong view of sin, and calls sin either that which is innocent, or which possesses no moral quality.

I commenced by saying that sin consists in bad motives, and that there is no necessary moral quality in any outward action, but this is not generally considered when people put moral labels upon outward actions. Some say it is sin to drink intoxicants even in moderation, others say the use of tobacco is sinful; to dance, to attend theatres, to play games of chance, to speculate, not to attend public service twice a day, and a hundred other acts of commission and omission, are said to be sinful by some, and are approved of by others.

Very many devout people consider that all animal desire is sinful, and some of the fathers of the Church, and the famous saints of old, have scourged their bodies and worn horse-hair garments next to their skin, in order to flagellate the flesh and bring it into subjection to their pious notions.

Some set themselves religious tasks and

put themselves under strict rules in the matter of prayer, reading the Scriptures and other similar things, and when they fail to measure fully up to these difficult tasks, they take on condemnation and think they have sinned.

Some have doubts concerning what they have been taught as Christian doctrine. Certain doctrines do not commend themselves to their reasons as being right, but under other influences and in really pious moments, they think they must have been wicked to have doubted, and they proceed to stultify their reasons to satisfy a false, even if devout conscience. These are samples of a thousand ways through which people bring themselves into condemnation when God does not, necessarily, condemn them at all.

I fear that many religious teachers, like the Pharisees of old, put too much stress upon rules and regulations and outward things, and "Put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," and at the same time are the creators of false consciences in those whom they teach.

How much better it is to teach principles than rules, and to cultivate spiritual life rather than a creed! Jesus made the Holy Spirit the convincer of sin and of righteousness, and when we learn to take His verdict upon our thoughts and actions we get a righteous judgment. The truly spiritual do not trust their own unaided judgment concerning their volitions and actions, but they do take the judgment of God the Holy Spirit. John on this matter declares (I. John 3:19-21): "Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him, whereinsoever our heart condemn us; because God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." And Paul states (I. Cor. 4:3, 4) "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord." The Holy Spirit convinces of sin and of righteousness; that is, tells us when we do right and when we do wrong; and the spiritually minded do not take condemnation from a creed, or an ordinance, or

pious rules, or from any human being, or from their own heart, or from the Devil, who is called in Scripture "The accuser of the brethren;" but they instinctively refer all matters, great and small, to The Holy Spirit, and abide by His verdict.

This is the tribunal to which Jesus always appealed, and this is what the Master instructed His disciples, and those who have learned this great spiritual secret find that God is less severe than the creeds, and more generous than their own heart, and that the Holy Spirit administers the laws of God in harmony with the doctrine of Jesus, that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

CHAPTER VII.

HEAVEN IS A HOLY PLACE.

Freedom from sin is a condition for entering heaven.—Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.—A Christian has the same character after death as a moment before death.—There is no sanctifying power in death.—Salvation from sin is never ascribed to death in the Bible.—Moral quality is in the soul, not in the body.—Is the body the chief cause of sin?—Jesus is the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” and it is done on earth.—To give moral praise or blame to material things is an absurdity.—A man’s body is a means of temptation as other material things are.

From the fact that heaven is a holy place, and that only holy people go there, I infer that God expects His children to live without sin on the earth.

It is not necessary to offer any proof that the inhabitants of heaven live without sin, because this is admitted on all hands, the only thing denied is that man can live without sin upon the earth, and so I assume that we all agree on this proposition.

But I desire to point out that heaven is peopled by immigrants from the earth,

called Christians. A thousand Christians in heaven, so far as moral character is concerned, are the same kind of people, precisely, as a thousand Christians upon the earth—they are all sinners saved by grace, and are what they are by the grace and power of God. Now if these people in heaven are able to live without sin from the moment they land there from the earth, is it not because their natures have been changed by the power of God, and because the power of God rests upon them? But were their natures not changed while upon the earth, and did not the Holy Spirit live in their bodies and spirits while here, and were they not a holy people living without sin before they went to heaven?

The fact is, that *heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people*, and a Christian has the same character after death, as he had a moment before death, and he could have been the same holy man a year, or any number of years, before death as he was at the moment of death. It is stated in Holy Writ, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and Jesus said that it was the pure in heart who would see God. It is

certain that holiness is a condition of entering heaven.

Now let us see what is involved in the contention that God's children cannot live without sin upon the earth, but that they do live without sin in heaven.

It involves the idea that there is some purifying or sanctifying power in death.

If God cannot impart power to His children to live without sin upon the earth, but can give such power in heaven, it would look as if there is some great power in death which then comes to the help of God, or to the help of His children, or to both. But is there any such power in death? So far as I know the Scriptures never ascribe salvation from sin to death. Sin is said to be the cause of death, and it would be a strange thing if death should prove to be the final cure of sin. Death itself is an evil, if the popular theory is true, but how an evil effect of an evil cause, can in turn become the cause of the destruction of the original evil, is something which I cannot understand, and it would seem to be an absurdity, or a natural impossibility.

Certain it is that the Scriptures do not ascribe any moral or spiritual power to death,

or give death any praise for human salvation from sin, for they ascribe all the glory to Jesus. John pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and this is the key-note of what is said both by God and man as recorded in the Scriptures.

If Christians can be holy in heaven, but cannot be holy on earth it would seem to imply, that there is some moral and spiritual quality in the material body.

The argument is, that the body is the chief means of the sin of the soul, and therefore, when the body is dead, being free from its most deadly temptation, the soul will be able to be holy, which was before an impossibility; but the thought underneath the argument is, to invest the body and its passions with moral quality, and this looks to me to be unchristian and unphilosophical.

I have no doubt that many sincere people practically hold this view of the body and look forward with joy to being free from it, so that then they will be able to live without sin; the theory is therefore worthy of careful consideration.

Taking it for granted that the soul is not

matter but spirit, and that the soul is the real individual which lives in the material body, and that at the death of the body the soul lives or the real individual lives and keeps its identity without the body, then it is clear that the body is but the temporary home of the soul, and as it is composed wholly of matter it cannot have any moral quality. To give either moral praise, or blame, to material things is an absurdity; and to praise or blame the human body is to be guilty of this absurdity.

For example, a man builds a house and it looks very beautiful, but it is unsanitary and has brought death to many of its occupants. Now, no person thinks of bestowing moral praise to the house for its beauty, or moral blame for its sanitary defects—we go back of the house, to the man who is responsible for it, when it comes to giving moral praise or blame.

A man's body is no doubt a means of temptation to him, and so are a thousand and one other material things outside of his body, but the resisting or the yielding to such temptations, are the only moral elements in the case.

CHAPTER VIII.

SINS OF THE BODY AND OF THE SOUL.

A person who cannot be holy in the body cannot be holy out of the body.—“He that is unrighteous let him do unrighteousness still.”—Widespread delusion concerning the share the body takes in causing people to sin.—It is the soul and not the body which controls the man.—Sins of the body not as numerous or powerful as the sins of the soul.—The deadly sins are all of the soul.—A soul without a body would have the same trouble to be holy as with a body.—The sins of the body are but two.—The sins of the soul are very numerous.—Sin is not a disease of the body.—God has made provision for living without sin.—A heart controlled by love does not sin.—To teach that sin is necessary is to give a license to sin.—The salvation of Jesus is perfect.—The power and grace of God is not limited.

EVEN if the body has no moral quality, is it true that its practical power for evil is so great, that the Christian cannot be holy while living in it, but that he can be holy when out of it? This question raises the real issue and we must face it.

After careful consideration I have reached the conclusion that a person who cannot be holy in the body, cannot be holy out of the

body. The Bible is true to experience, and is philosophical in its statement in referring to the dead in this language: "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still." A man who cannot, or will not, be holy in the body through the grace and power of God, will be equally unsuccessful when out of the body, even if the same Divine power is at his command.

There is a widespread delusion concerning the share the body has in causing people to sin against God. For many years I have been a careful student and critical observer of myself. I have watched the operations of my mind and body. I have analyzed the desires and aspirations of my soul, and the passions and appetites of my animal nature without conscious bias and without fear or favor, and as though I were watching another man. I have even made many experiments, and I have concluded from my investigations that it is not my body which controls me, when my heart is true to God; but that it is my soul; and when, alas! I have allowed my soul to be controlled by

my body, it has been when I would not allow God to control my soul.

I have also been a diligent observer of other Christians, and in a few cases have been able to get close to them; I have probed them as deeply as I was able in order to get at their inner experiences of these spiritual things, and with the same result as the naturally closer scrutiny of myself.

Now I find that these facts fit the Bible theory perfectly, for it places responsibility in the soul, and makes God the power that saves it from sin. The Bible also requires holiness as a condition of entering heaven, and God has made every provision for making man holy while here upon the earth, and while in the body.

But as a matter of fact, the so-called sins of the body are not nearly as numerous nor as powerful, as the sins of the soul.

The real deadly sins, and those that from a human standpoint, are the hardest to eradicate, are not of the flesh but of the soul. A soul without a body, living on earth, would have practically the same trouble to be holy as if with a body. I am aware that this does not appear to be so to the average

Christian, because the average Christian does not think deeply, but an examination and classification of sins will show us that, the sins of the body are less numerous, and very much less virulent, than the sins of the soul. Traced back to their source the so-called sins of the body are but two, and they are derived from passion and appetite, and may be called lust and gluttony, in which of course are included drunkenness and kindred vices. But even these two sins, vile as they are, at their roots are not sinful, for they are but right things used in a wrong way, or are the improper use of a passion and an appetite, the proper uses of which are essential to life. On the other hand, the sins of the soul are very numerous and most of them are at their roots essentially sinful. To see this clearly, I have but to mention pride, envy, anger, malice, hatred, jealousy, evil speaking, waywardness, rebellion against God, and in general the soul doing those things that the conscience forbids, and the not doing of those things which the soul knows it ought to do. These are the sins that inhere in the soul, and are woven into the warp and woof of the spiritual nature,

and unless God performs the miracle of making a new creature, in holiness and righteousness, while on earth, I know of no way by which such a soul will find entrance to heaven.

It will be seen from what I have said that sin is not, as is popularly supposed, a disease of the body, but it is essentially a disease of the soul, and all those who are trusting to death to work out the cure of sin are doomed to disappointment, nor do I see any hope for those who are not able to live without sinning while in the body, of being able to do so when out of the body.

God has certainly made provision for his children to live without sin in this life, nor is such an experience, when properly understood, extraordinary. It must be that the great majority of true Christians really live such a life, even though through their false ideals they may not think so. When Christians love God with all their hearts, then all their thoughts and actions spring from love, and there can be no sin in love. Error and infirmity there may be, and indeed cannot help but be, but a thought or an act born of love never is displeasing to God, and a life

controlled by love is a life well pleasing to God.

To teach that people cannot live without sin, is, in fact, to give a license to sin, and such teaching is directly responsible for the unbelief which keeps people in their sins.

God certainly knows the *possibility* of each soul, and *that* therefore without controversy, can be attained, and when it is attained, God approves that soul and when God approves who dare condemn?

The salvation wrought out for us by Jesus is not defective ; but it is a salvation to the uttermost. God does not slightly heal the hurt of his people but he entirely cures the wound. The grace of God is not limited, for it saves the soul from sin and keeps it from sinning. The Holy Spirit, in the heart of God's child, keeps that fountain of life pure and sweet and the fountain being pure the stream is pure. The Holy Spirit is more than a match for all the powers of darkness that combine to destroy the integrity of God's elect, and they are always made to triumph and sing a song of victory.

CHAPTER IX.

SPIRITUAL POWER.

Confused ideas prevalent concerning spiritual power.—Lack of experience the cause.—A blind man not an authority on colors.—A theory short of the experience is sure to be wrong.—Wrong views are better than no views.—It is neither physical nor intellectual power.—“God has chosen the weak things to confound the mighty.”—Spiritual power is not emotion.—It is not an unnatural strain.—It is not mesmeric power.—It is not inconsistent with a great calm.—A man’s sensations no gauge of his spiritual power.—Does not affect all persons alike.—Different manifestations but the same power.—The power is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

I KNOW of few subjects upon which there is so much diversity of opinion, and of which Christian people have so confused ideas as that of spiritual power.

I refer to that spiritual experience which Jesus promised His disciples in His statement, “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you,” and to the fact that the Master’s words in this promise are, in my opinion, generally misunderstood.

We do not often find religious teachers

who agree in their statement as to what the power is, what its manifestations are, how it is received and retained and the persons who are endued with it. Perhaps the chief reason for this confusion is, that many who teach concerning it have never experienced the power personally, and they must needs be in error; for no man can correctly theorize concerning such a subject unless he is actually in possession of the experience.

There are few branches of even human knowledge which can be correctly taught by one who has not had actual experience in the subject, and who does not know of his own knowledge that which he teaches; although there may be some subjects which are exceptions to this rule. But a blind man can never be an authority on colors, nor can a deaf man be a teacher of music, and it is equally impossible for a man to correctly describe a spiritual experience of which he has not himself partaken.

It is true that an intelligent Christian may read the promise of the Master concerning this great gift, and draw his own conclusion as to what it is, and the way it may be obtained; and he may impart his own ideas to

others, but his conception of it, short of actual experience, is sure to be wide of the mark, and he will be but little better than the blind leading the blind.

Still incorrect views of sincere men concerning this as well as other great spiritual questions, are infinitely better than no views at all, and it does seem impossible to arrive at new truth without wading through error, but the wrong view of a real truth-seeker to-day is always a step toward the right view to-morrow, for God always meets such a man in his spiritual investigations and reveals to him all essential truth.

So I rejoice in all the views that are advocated on this all important subject of spiritual power, and hail with the right hand of fellowship those who are investigating its wonderful depths.

But I desire to help spiritual students to as clear an understanding of this subject from an intellectual standpoint, as can be obtained ; by first clearing away the rubbish which has gathered around it so that the truth itself may be seen as it is.

What is the power that Jesus said Christians should have after that they had received

the Holy Ghost? It does not in my opinion necessarily mean that the physical powers will be increased or be above the normal, for we all know that some men who are powerful physically are lacking in spiritual strength, while others who are weak physically demonstrate the power of God in their lives.

Nor does spiritual power imply that a man will of necessity be intellectually strong as compared with other men. Some intellectual giants are spiritual imbeciles; and we read that God hath chosen the weak things to confound the mighty. Doubtless a person clothed with spiritual power will make the best use possible of his physical as well as of his intellectual powers, but I do not think that either of these are necessarily increased thereby, although there may be some exceptions to this rule.

It is generally supposed that a person clothed with spiritual power experiences great emotion, that his nature is under a pressure of feeling like steam in a boiler pressing upon every square inch, driving him through life at a wonderful speed, and enabling him to do the work of a half-dozen ordinary men. Such an experience is often

pictured by teachers of the higher life, and hundreds as a result seek such power and not being able to find it give up the quest. Others succeed in getting an experience similar to that which I have described, and in error call it the power which Jesus promised; but in a few days or weeks human nature rebels at the unnatural strain, and reaction sets in. Then such persons think that they have driven the Holy Spirit away and have lost the spiritual power which they thought they possessed.

Or it may be, in some cases, that persons do actually receive the Holy Spirit, and consequent spiritual power; its manifestations are great mental and nervous excitement, with mesmeric power or extraordinary influence over their fellow-men, and they confound the Holy Spirit, Who is not an emotion and Whose intention is to abide always, with these manifestations, which of necessity can be of but short duration, or at most will but come and go like the early cloud and the morning dew. So when the manifestation is gone such persons cast away their faith in the Holy One, and become again like other men.

Evidently spiritual power may exist with great emotion and wonderful manifestations of human energy and strength, or it may exist with the quiet and calm of a summer evening, without a ripple upon the spiritual deep, or sufficient breeze to fill the sails of the emotions.

A man's sensations are no gauge whatever of the power of the Spirit; the only true gauge being that of simple faith, committing one's self to the Unseen and trusting the Invisible with the same confidence with which men trust that which they see and handle.

Again, although the Holy Spirit is "For us and our children, and for all that are afar off," yet being possessed of Him will not make all men alike, or affect them in the same way. This may not seem an important statement on the face of it, but we shall find upon investigation that it reveals a very serious practical difficulty in the minds and experiences of many.

We come in contact with men either by reading or personally, who are filled with the Holy Spirit and power. We wonder at their work, we admire their character, we

marvel at the beauty and symmetry of their lives, and straightway we want to be *like them*. They tell us the story of their spiritual education, of their former defeats and of the present victories of their faith. They ascribe all their conquests to the Lamb and to the indwelling Holy Spirit, and urge us to receive the Comforter as they did.

Under these influences many begin to seek for the spiritual power manifested in such lives and in the majority of cases I fear set God a plan, and want to be like the individual whose wonderful experience and teaching have created in them this holy aspiration. But God works to no man's plans, and rarely if ever makes two lives alike, for with the same spiritual power He creates in men an endless diversity of manifestations.

Persons who thus seek, I venture to say, never find, until they cease asking for a particular kind of blessing, and ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit, without setting Him any plan as to the manifestation.

But the Scriptures end all controversy on this point. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the

word of knowledge by the same Spirit. To another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit. To another the working of miracles by the same Spirit; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will." Now these experiences, referred to by Paul, in the quotation which I have given, can only be possessed by persons who are endued with the power of the Holy Spirit, and yet the manifestation of the power is different in each case. It is not to be supposed that Paul stated more than a few samples of the manifestations which are a result of the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the list can be indefinitely extended.

Indeed while there may be much in common enjoyed by those who are thus spiritually endued, yet it is a fact, that the manifestations of this spiritual power are as varied as are human faces, and its special gifts as multiform as are the needs of each individual and the special work to which he may be called.

CHAPTER X.

POWER FOR THE ENTIRE MAN.

Man needs Divine power to properly fulfil any of the functions of life.—Must not limit it to what is called spiritual work.—The Holy Spirit does not give new faculties.—God enables each to successfully accomplish His providential work.—Must not set God a plan.—The Holy Spirit imparts different gifts, also varying degrees of the same gift.—One condition of being endowed with the power of God is to accept gladly His plans for us.—Divine Power is simply the power to do one's whole duty.—To always hear the Father saying "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—To see God in all the events of His providence.—The power to live without any regret.

GOD never intended that man should be sufficient of himself to fulfil properly any of the high functions of life, or to adequately discharge any of its important duties without Divine aid. Spiritual power, the power of the Holy Spirit, is an essential to all men. The tendency is to limit this need to what is called spiritual work, but it is needed for the proper discharge of all sorts of legitimate work, and so we might say that to one

is given the spirit of merchandise, to another the gift of banking, and to another the skill of a mechanic, and to another motherhood and domesticity, and to another agriculture, to another the power to rule, and to another the spirit of service. The Holy Spirit anoints one to preach and another to hear; one to write and another to read; and all these are but the different manifestations of that one and same Spirit who is God the Holy Spirit.

The Holy One does not give different faculties, or new natural abilities, but He does supplement the lack that all serious men feel; He does intensify, give point and force, and marshal the natural adaptation of each against the difficulties that are encountered, so that "One shall chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight." Men fail in their work because they lack the power of God, but no man fails no matter what his work, who is energized by the Spirit, for the promise of the Master is, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you."

By these remarks I would emphasize to a seeker of this power, the importance of

not trying to be made like any other man, or to set God in any way a plan, but simply to receive the promised Holy Spirit, and let His power work out the finished product in your life.

While the Holy Spirit imparts different gifts to Christians, He also gives different degrees of the same kind of gift to different individuals, as it may please Him. So that it is not for us to say whether we shall be Spirit-filled men of the first or any other magnitude, and no man in my opinion can enjoy the fulness of the Spirit unless he is as willing to be last as he is to be first, as willing to be the least as he is to be chief in this spiritual kingdom. This possibly may be one reason why so few are filled with all the fulness of God, for the last thing that dies even in a good man is the desire that he should be an important person.

But, if I may repeat the question, what is spiritual power? I would answer in a word, that it is the power of God in a man, by which he is enabled to do the work, and act well the part which God has assigned to him. It is simply the power to do one's whole duty, the power to be a faithful steward

of the manifold grace of God ; but I will give a few particulars.

In the first place I would say that it is the possession of the constant testimony of the Holy Spirit that we are well pleasing to God ; to hear always the words that were heard concerning Jesus, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," to know that " The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God ;" to realize that " He hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

To have such an experience of God's approval, presupposes that we have learned the secret of obedience, that we do know how to avail ourselves of the Holy Spirit, and that by His strength we constantly do the will of God so that His witness is to an actual accomplished fact. It is dangerous to say it, but practically it is the power to live without sin. Now no mere man can so live ; for the seductions and the weaknesses of human nature are so great, the subtlety of the Devil and evil are so fascinating, the mysterious influences of evil spirits are so constant and powerful, that human nature

alone is unable to cope with them. But the battle is with God and not with man; and a man filled with the Holy Spirit is more than a match for all the powers of evil.

Mere men it seems to me must constantly sin in thought word and deed, but "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" to live without committing sin. And as stated before, such a man is not a mere man, but a man plus the Holy Spirit, and he must of necessity be invincible against the powers of darkness.

God certainly does not intend to take away moral responsibility or to save a man from the necessity of learning by his mistakes; nor does He do for him what He intends him to do for himself, but it is the work of the Holy Spirit to do that which a man cannot do for himself, and to supply the necessary power to every spiritual weakness so that one who is filled with the Spirit can live in a way to constantly please God. There certainly is no room for human boasting here, but for profound humility and thankfulness, and such a soul will make her boast only in God and give Him all the glory.

Spiritual power also causes us to see God in all the events of His providence and to know that all things work together for our good. The saints of old knew that, "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord," and Jesus taught that, such is God's care of His children, that the very hairs of their heads are numbered. This means that God is interested in all the details of our life, and permits nothing to happen except that which will work out our highest good.

Therefore, He being Almighty, no misfortune can befall His children; but all that does happen to them is either a blessing plainly seen, which excites the sensations of sight with holy emotion, or it is a blessing disguised for a purpose, which calls forth the liveliest exercises of faith, with profound thankfulness. Sighing, lamentation, woe, regret, desiring sympathy, eagerness for praise, are words not needed in our vocabulary when describing the experience of the the Spirit-filled Christian.

CHAPTER XI.

SPIRITUAL POWER AND SUCCESS.

The Christian draws all prizes and no blanks.—“All things work together for good.”—Loss is made gain, and failure is better than success.—To be content with what is.—God’s providences are interpreted as they transpire.—Have power to “Glory in tribulation.”—The “Unseen” is the power that attracts.—All work which God commits to us is successfully done.—Man only thus, becomes a success like the balance of the universe.—The power of the Holy Spirit adjusts every man to his environment.—It enables every man to find the exact work to which God has appointed him, and thus be a success.—The power of God is more than a match for heredity and environment.—Amazing unbelief concerning Divine guidance.—It is a walk of faith.—The truths that Jesus laid most stress upon, are most generally neglected by religious teachers.

IF life is a lottery as some unbelievers foolishly say, then the Christian draws all prizes and no blanks; and if he does draw what looks like a blank, it is for him better than a prize. Life is certainly full of pitfalls and dangers, but the Christian filled with the Spirit of wisdom falls into none of them. If it is true that nine men out of

ten are failures, then the man in whom the Spirit of God dwells is always the tenth, for spiritual power precludes the possibility of failure.

It is not denied that things do happen to Christians which are called failures, and they get into positions that are said to be calamitous, but it is the universal testimony of Christians afterwards in looking at the results, that failure was only another name for success, and blessing was simply misnamed-calamity, and every Christian testifies in the light of past experience that all things have worked together for his good.

But, present *spiritual power enables one to call things by their proper names as they transpire*; to rejoice in tribulation at the time, and to recognize the hand of God in sorrow; to be thankful for every experience that comes, no matter how seemingly sad to the eye of sense. But this can only be done by the power of God, and therefore we see divinity in the words of the man who wrote from his own experience, "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also," and again, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more

exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." This is an experience beyond the range of philosophy ; too subtle to be scientifically understood ; more extravagant than poets ever dreamed of, and to which Christians attain only by waiting upon God in faith for the fulfilment of the promise of Jesus, " But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

One true sign of spiritual power is that the work which God commits to us, is successfully done.

The adaptation of nature to carry out her evident purposes ; the fitness of every power in the universe to perform its functions, the evidence of design in earth, sea and sky ; the fact that the universe is known to be a vast machine, with most complicated mechanism, the one part fitted to every other part with absolute perfection, and the whole accomplishing an intelligent purpose ; has for ages been used to demonstrate the existence of God ; and although this method of reasoning may fall short of actual proof of the existence of the God we believe in, it

certainly does demonstrate the existence of a Being who has made all things to accomplish His purpose with unerring certainty.

The will and purpose of God is stamped upon all creation, animate and inanimate, and all carry out His sovereign purpose. Man alone, it is said, has been invested with intelligence and free will, and he alone has seen fit to balk or frustrate the purpose of God. Had he, however, remained morally and spiritually true as the balance of the universe has been mechanically and physically true, he too would have accomplished every purpose the Creator planned for him. The religion of Jesus is to restore man to harmony with God; to adjust him to his environment; to fit him for the work which he ought to do. It is clear that God has a work for each man, and it must be that the work is adapted to the worker, and all men who come back to God according to Jesus's plan, and who receive the Holy Spirit as He directs, will succeed in every detail of life and carry out the purpose of God the same as all the rest of the universe. No matter what may be the weakness of the man or

the demands of the work. God's children are supplied with adequate "Power after that they have received the Holy Ghost."

A man under the full control of the Master, will assuredly find the work for which he is intended and fitted, and this alone is a guarantee of success. Those of course who take the bit between their teeth and go their own way at their own pace, will be likely to make failures and miss the road on which God intends them to travel, but the possession of spiritual power keeps a man from doing this, for it is impossible that God will misdirect any man.

It is true that we must let God be the judge of what success really is, and in this we have to walk by faith, for often a state of things transpires, which seems like failure, but if we are true to God, it is only seeming failure, and seeming failure is either itself success or the only road that can lead to it.

Another of the results of spiritual power is *the ability given us to always choose with wisdom the way we should walk and the work we should undertake.*

The question has been debated for ages as to whether human actions and destiny

are necessary or contingent ; that is, whether *Must* or *May*, regulates our present actions and future position. Much can be said in favor of either contention, and from many standpoints it does seem that we are the creatures of circumstances, that our characters and consequent actions are formed *for* us and not *by* us ; that the position in which we now find ourselves and the opinions we now hold have been brought about by a process outside of our choice.

Certainly we had no voice in choosing our paternity, or the surroundings of our birth and early training, and it looks as if nine-tenths of character and future position depended upon these two original conditions. Looking from this standpoint alone, we would say that we are creatures of circumstances and the sport of chance ; as much under the law of necessity as the universe is under the law of gravitation. But when we take God into consideration and the fact that He must have a plan and a purpose in each man's life ; and when we think of man with his almost omnipotent power of will and choice, then it looks as though man was under the law of *May* and not *Must*, that

his actions are dependent upon himself and not upon necessity. Powerful as are heredity and early training, influential as are circumstances and environment to shape our course, decide our character or fix our destiny; there are mightier forces at our call which can overturn and bring to naught all influences that would tend to keep us from our God-appointed walk and work.

I have just referred to "The almost omnipotent power of the human will," but I do not mean by that, that an effort of mere will or purpose however strong, will evolve out of a man's self a power that will bring about any desired result; but I do mean that the will is mighty to choose right and refuse wrong, to link itself to God, or to refuse so to do; and that upon this exercise of the will, character and destiny depend. The Holy Spirit and Scripture, the inner self and reason, not only teach a man his impotency to direct his own course, and to obey his best impulses, but call aloud to him to join himself to the Infinite; and if he will but obey this fourfold call, "He will not full direction lack or miss his providential way."

The practical unbelief among Christians

on the question of Divine guidance is simply appalling, in view of the clear voice of revelation on the subject.

If one thing is clearer than another in both Old and New Testaments, it is that God is the guide of His people, that "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord;" that "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." We are to acknowledge the Lord in all our ways and He will direct our paths. If we lack wisdom we may ask of God and He will supply it. But Jesus is more emphatic than any concerning sure and certain guidance, and says that when the Holy Spirit comes He will guide us into all truth, and will teach us all things. In fact, no person can read the words of our Lord and Master concerning the Holy Spirit, without seeing that the Comforter is to dwell with the Christian as a continual guest, and that His business with him is to guide him in the right way, and teach him all truth as fast as he can stand the lessons.

God enters into security with every Spirit-led Christian that he shall never miss his way or his work, and he only is the wise

man who takes God at His word, and in the simplicity of faith walks through life with the full consciousness that he is so guided.

It is a walk of faith pure and simple for to-day, but when to-day becomes yesterday, faith has received a scientific justification by the only true test, for then faith is always vindicated by actual knowledge.

Now if I am right in these conclusions as to spiritual power, I fear that thereby I condemn a great many religious teachers, for I rarely read or hear the teaching concerning the Master's great bequest as He himself taught.

The gospel I hear and read from Christian teachers with rare exception is a true gospel, so far as it goes; but it is very incomplete; the truths that Jesus laid most stress upon being almost completely overlooked, and the truths which He only incidentally alluded to being preached with great vigor. Is it possible that the reason for this is in the fact that, few have received the Holy Spirit or tarried as He directed, until they have been endued with the spiritual power which comes upon the advent of the Comforter?

CHAPTER XII.

THE VOICE OF GOD.

The mode of God's existence cannot be strictly defined.—

The Scriptures do not attempt such a definition of God.—

We have to reason from ourselves to God.—Man made in

the image of God.—As a babe to a man, a drop of water to

the ocean, or a ray of light to the Sun.—God has the power

to communicate to man, as we have to one another.—What

is the language in which God speaks?—Do the Scriptures

tell every time God spake to Bible characters?—Has God

never spoken to men other than Bible characters?—Was

Abram the only living man in his day to whom God spake?

—Has God confined his communications to the Hebrew

race?—The religious history of the ancient nations is an

answer to these questions.—Melchisedec, the King of

Salem, and the Roman General, Cornelius.—The Phil-

sophers of Greece and Rome.—The founders of the great

religions of the earth.

THE mode or method of God's existence, is incapable of full and exact definition, notwithstanding the fact that thousands of thoughtful and serious minds have attempted it. Christian thinkers are, however, practically agreed; still even among them when pressed to close quarters, there is a wide

diversity of opinion on minor parts of the subject.

The Scriptures do not attempt an exact definition of God, nor attempt to prove His existence, and for the most part simply assume both the fact, as well as the method of His existence.

God's intellectual nature and qualities are to be learned chiefly from analogy, intuition, experience and personal revelation. We are compelled to reason from our own intellectual or spiritual qualities up to God. Nor does this seem to be either an inaccurate or an unscriptural method, for we learn that "God made man in His own image, in the image of God created He him." That is, I take it, man is a miniature God. As a babe is to a man, the distance only being greater, so man is to God. As a drop of water is to the ocean, or a ray of light to the orb of day, so are man's spiritual or intellectual qualities to his Creator's. Hence the qualities I possess, such as reason, memory, will, choice, perception, love and language in a limited degree, are possessed by God in an unlimited degree. As David said, "He that planted the ear, shall He

not hear? He that formed the eye shall He not see?" and I might add, on the same method of reasoning, and as appropriate to my argument, shall not He that gave us the power to communicate our thoughts to others, Himself possess the power to communicate His thoughts to His creatures?

Not only are we all agreed that God has the power to communicate His mind to His creatures, but also on the fact that such a communication has actually been made, and been repeated many times over, as recorded in the Scriptures.

From this basis of agreement, many divergent theories have been conceived and no wonder; for the admitted fact that God has a language in which He can talk to man, and that men have actually conversed with Him, suggests an almost infinite number of questions, several of which we now refer to.

Do the Holy Scriptures contain an account of every communication of God with Scriptural characters? For instance, do they record all the conversations between God and our first parents? Do they contain an

account of each time Jehovah talked to the men mentioned in the Scriptures, who walked with Him? Have we a record of each time God talked with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, David, and the Prophets? Was not John the Baptist, while in the wilderness, instructed in his great mission personally by God? If not, from whom did he get his mission and his message? And yet, the Scriptural account of John's training, is a very meagre one. Are all the communications of God to Jesus written down in the Book? Do we know all God said to the Apostles? To ask such questions, is to answer them with a decided, "No."

The Scriptures contain all that is necessary for salvation, and there is no lack in them in this regard, and this, I take it, is their supreme purpose, but they are not, and do not claim to be a complete history of all God said to the holy men whose names are there recorded. Only such essential facts and sample messages as were needed for future generations, have been preserved to us.

In this, it is doubtless the same as in the case of Jesus, for John in his Gospel says,

“And there are also many other things, which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”

Another interesting question from the admitted fact that God can and has conversed with men is,

Are the men mentioned in the Scriptures the only men God has conversed with?

When Abram in his native home, Ur in Chaldea, was told by God to leave that country for another, which God would show him; was he at that time, the only man of earth's millions for whom God had a message? There is no Scriptural character or contemporary with Abram, to whom God spake, so far as the written record goes, but it is an impossible feat for my judgment and reason to suppose that there were no others.

When the Hebrew nation was as yet confined to Jacob and his shepherd sons, was there no other godly boy besides Joseph among the numerous families of the earth that God spake to? It must be that there were many of them. To say otherwise were

almost a reflection upon the success of God's purpose in drowning the world.

That God did not purpose to confine His communications to Abram and his seed, is proved by that strange character Melchisedec, who as well as being a Priest of the Most High God, was also King of Salem, and therefore a Priest in the same country. The Scriptures do not attempt to give any detailed history of these Salemites, nor of their methods of worship, but from the account we have of one of their number, God clearly talked to them.

There are many other references in the Scriptures to individuals not of Abrahamic descent, or properly Scriptural characters, who served the true God, and hence to whom God must have communicated Himself.

If the religious history of the ancient nations were accurately recorded, it would be similar to the record of the Hebrew nations, so far as the communication of God to the Spiritual is concerned. The only distinction that I can make, is that God chose the Israelites for special purposes, and chiefly that from this nation, the earth's Saviour was to come. It will be seen, that the opinion I am expressing,

was a discovery to Peter in the case of the Roman General, Cornelius, and Peter in evident surprise declares, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."

It must be that many of the old philosophers of Greece and Rome, were in communication with the Unseen God, notwithstanding the fact that they thought of Him as many, instead of the One Supreme Being. The marvellous men who were the founders of the great religions of the earth, each claimed to be taught of God, and to my mind, certain of their claims are well founded, notwithstanding the errors contained in these systems. Some of them were men of pure characters, judging them by the standards of the age in which they lived ; and most of their systems teach a morality that compares favorably with the morality of the Scriptures.

While God intends that Christianity, like the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, is to roll on until it fills the whole earth, yet it is a fact, that there is much in

nonchristian systems of religion, which is of God, and harmonizes with the truth as taught by Jesus. This to me is an evidence that the same God who has talked with us, has communicated with the men of these systems also.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VOICE OF GOD IN THE SOUL.

Has God ceased talking to men?—Are we left exclusively to the Bible?—Does the inspired book take the place of God?—It were blasphemy to so teach.—It practically banishes God from the world.—Bibliolaters are idolaters.—God still communicates with His children.—No dispensation without a record of God speaking direct.—Did God cease to speak after the Apostolic age, as the canon of Scripture was then closed?—The masses did not have the Scriptures till after the discovery of printing in the fifteenth century.—The New Testament not collated until the Council of Laodicea in the fourth century.—How did Christians find out the mind of God in all these centuries?—The Holy Spirit was then, as now, the guide and teacher of His people.—The Holy Spirit with and without the Bible and the Church, guides His people.—God has never abdicated His direct authority.—Jesus on His departure, left His followers in the care of the Holy Spirit.

WE are agreed that God has conversed with men in the past, but does He still continue to do so? Or, having revealed His will to holy men in the past, and that revelation being published in the Bible, does He leave us exclusively to its teachings?

Is it the plan and purpose of God that the

Holy Scriptures are in an exclusive sense, to take His place in the world as the teacher of mankind? Is it true that He does not now communicate direct with the human soul?

Does a book, even though it is undoubtedly inspired, take the place of God? Does the living Father refuse to communicate any longer with His children, except through the medium of the Scriptures?

I was going to say, it were blasphemy so to teach, and it certainly is contrary to common sense, contrary to the Scriptures themselves, and contradicts the experience of the spiritual in all dispensations, including the present. It practically banishes God from the world, if the theory is carried to its logical conclusion, and God instead of governing in the affairs of men directly, and especially in matters of duty and salvation, has delegated His prerogative to a book.

Those who so teach are known as Bibliolaters and they are just one step removed from idolaters. That few, if any, of them realize the logic of their own teaching, I must believe, and they may not be aware of its disastrous consequences. There are, however,

many tinged with this heresy, and my mission in the world is to point out the danger, and call men back to spirituality ; to a living, seeing, hearing, speaking, personal, loving God and Saviour ; to the great Unseen One, who pervades all space, " In whom we live, and move, and have our being ; " to emphasize Paul's great reminder, " Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you ? "

I have said, that the theory, that God does not converse with men direct, is unscriptural and contrary to the experience of the spiritual in all the dispensations. Now, for a moment, let us look into this broad statement.

Go through the Bible, and see if there is a single dispensation without some record of God talking to somebody. I only need to mention the different dispensations, and your memories will supply the evidence. Think of the time covered by Adam, Noah, and Abraham ; the dispensations covered by Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, and you will remember how God conversed with them. God's voice was heard while the Israelites were in bondage in

Egypt, while in the wilderness, as well as in the Promised Land. When they were governed by Judges, God spake ; and when they demanded a King, His voice was heard. During the reign of the Kings in Judah and Israel, God spake personally to the monarchs themselves, that had ears to hear ; and when they had not, He communicated through some spiritual man whose spiritual hearing was acute and whose faithfulness God could depend upon.

The same is true of the various captivities of the Jews ; there is always a record of what God said. The expression, "Thus saith the Lord," is a sentence repeated in the Old Testament Scriptures with great frequency.

God also talked to men in the time of John the Baptist, also during the ministry of Jesus. After His departure, history tells the same story, all through the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, right on to the end of the Book of Revelation.

God talked to men right along in the person of the Holy Spirit in the early part of this dispensation, as recorded in the New Testament ; and why, I ask, if He does not now speak, did He suddenly stop doing so ?

We are in the same dispensation and need the Father's personal care and guidance, at least as much as they did in former times. Nor is there one word said in the New Testament, or elsewhere in the Scriptures, that God was going to stop His personal communication. In fact, the very contrary is taught by Jesus, as I will demonstrate further on.

If it is said that God ceased to communicate with individuals after the Apostolic age, as the canon of Scripture was then closed, and the people had the Bible to which they could refer to get the mind of God;—I will answer by calling attention to the fact that the masses did not have the Scriptures until after the discovery of printing in the fifteenth century, and even then, for many years, but few persons could possess themselves of a copy, on account of the great expense. Is it reasonable to think that God did not speak to his children through all these centuries?

Several generations lived and died after the age of the Apostles, before the Church had even decided which of the sacred writings were canonical, and which were apocryphal;

for it was not until the Council of Laodicea in the fourth century, that the present books of the New Testament were collected together, in one volume, and even then the Apocalypse was rejected.

In the meantime, thousands of Christians lived and died and doubtless did the will of God. What, I ask, was their rule of faith and practice? How could they find out the mind of God as to their duty? What or who gave them satisfactory assurance of their salvation? The sacred books were in the shape of parchments, held in the custody of the different churches, and necessarily there were but few copies in existence, so that the people could not find out the mind of God through them.

Men and women were converted through the oral testimony concerning Jesus and the resurrection, and when they believed, the Spirit of God witnessed, that is, told them they were forgiven, and that they were His children, and this was the vindication of their faith. They knew they were saved, not by anything written in a book, but by the testimony of God in their souls. They were made acquainted with the Holy Spirit

and He became their guide and teacher, as Jesus said He would.

Just as in all time previous to the ascension of our Lord, there was a way to get the mind of God, or to learn from Him what was both duty and privilege; so Jesus taught, that after He went away, God would come nearer than ever to His people, and stay with them constantly, in a grander and more real manner than ever before in the history of the world.

The very heart of the mission of Jesus, was to procure the Holy Spirit for the people, to convince them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: that is, to show men that they are sinners, to witness or tell them when they are made righteous, and to give judgment or discernment of right from wrong, so that they may continue to be righteous.

Instead of God abdicating His direct authority and direct guidance of His people, or ceasing to talk with them, in favor either of the Church or the Bible, the contrary is the case. The prophet Joel, speaking of this dispensation says, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon

all flesh ; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions : and also upon the servants and the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

The last discourses or conversations of Jesus with His disciples were to prepare them for His departure in the flesh, and to inform them that henceforth He as God, would dwell with them in the person of the Holy Spirit.

He told them, that the Holy Spirit would be with them as really as He, Jesus, has been ; that the Holy Spirit would carry on their education, and be their teacher in all things, as He had been while in the flesh. They were not to be left without a Comforter and teacher ; and more than that, His going away was to be an actual gain, as the Spirit's presence and comforting words were to be of more advantage to them, and to develop them faster than Jesus could, while with them personally. He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

The Master while in the body could only

be in one place at the same time, and only those could be personally instructed by Him who were with Him, but in the Person of the Holy Spirit, He is omnipresent, and has His dwelling constantly in the body of each individual believer ; hence the change was an immense advantage to His followers, as Jesus predicted.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOD'S METHOD OF SPEAKING.

Guidance by the Holy Spirit better even than the oral teaching of Jesus.—Each Christian is taught individually.—Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things.—The trend of Jesus' teaching is to lead away from the seen to the unseen.—He sought to develop in his followers spiritual faculties to apprehend God.—The central truth of Christ's teaching is the abiding of the Holy Spirit.—Eighteen distinct, and vital functions of the Holy Spirit, as taught by Jesus.—The parting message of Jesus before his arrest was to commend them to the Holy Spirit.—At the first meeting with the Apostles after His resurrection He refers them to the Holy Spirit.—His parting benediction on His ascension was, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."—On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came.—From that time the Holy Spirit was taken as guide and teacher by the Apostles.

The method of imparting instruction by the Holy Spirit was to be an advantage to Christ's followers.

Jesus taught by word of mouth, in set discourses, as well as by ordinary conversation, but His teaching necessarily concerned the general good, and was on subjects of

vast import, yet for the most part of general import. And although it is true, that all His teaching is for individuals, yet there are a multitude of lessons that each individual needs to learn that cannot be learned from general instruction.

Each human soul is a vast community in itself, and covers a field of needs not represented by any other soul since the world was, nor will it be as long as it shall stand, notwithstanding the fact that we all need much in common. Thus each man must be taught individually, and no person can teach anyone ultimate truth in these vital matters of the soul, but God himself, and it can be done more effectually by the Spirit's inward voice than by outward instruction.

So it came to pass that Jesus had to leave more lessons to be taught by the Holy Spirit, than He had imparted personally, for said He, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." The Holy Spirit is an abiding teacher, dwelling constantly in the heart of the believer, and carrying on His process of tuition day by

day, imparting such lessons as the soul may need, and in such a way as it can bear. This, therefore, is the great advantage of the departure of Jesus, and of His new, or changed method of teaching.

The whole tendency of Christ's teaching is to lead men away from the seen to the unseen, from the material to the spiritual, from leaning upon the senses, to spiritual perception, from walking by sight to a walking by faith in the invisible God.

There is a spiritual man inside of every material man, and the religion of Jesus, while it is for the whole man, is particularly for this spiritual person. It is the privilege of this spiritual man to "See Him who is invisible," and to be always conscious of the presence of God; to hear the voice of God without the vibration of sound waves, and receive spiritual instruction at the hands of the Master, either with or without the instrumentality of the Bible, just as the Divine Teacher himself may elect.

As was natural, Jesus emphasized the great central truth of his religion; that is, the coming, and the abiding of the Holy Spirit as Comforter, Guide, Teacher and

Empowerer, in His last messages. On the night of His betrayal, after supper, and before going to the garden, He delivered that wonderful discourse, the chief topic of which was the Coming One. He repeats it over and over again, in different parts of His address in a variety of ways.

If we analyze what He said about Him, it is something like this. (1) A person was coming to take the Master's place. (2) This person was a Spirit and therefore not visible to the outward eye. (3) He was to be a comforter to Christ's followers. (4) He was to be a teacher, and a guide to lead them into all truth. (5) He was to be a revealer of the teachings of Jesus. (6) He was to testify of Jesus, that is, to make Him known then, and in coming generations, for "No man can call Jesus the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (7) The world, or unspiritual persons were not to be conscious of his presence, for Jesus said, "Whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not." (8) The spiritual were to be conscious of His presence; "But ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (9) He was to be a Spirit of Truth, thus protecting

God's children from the father of lies, the Devil. (10) His presence and administration was to be an improvement upon the personal presence and administration of Jesus, for the Saviour said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." (11) He was to reprove or convince of wrong. (12) He was to witness or approve the right. (13) He was to give clear judgment, so as to discern the Devil and sin. (14) He was to reveal to Christians, the wealth of Jesus and the inexhaustible riches of His Kingdom. (15) The Holy Spirit was not for the Apostles only, as some do vainly say, for He was to abide forever. (16) He was to be sent by the Father as well as the Son, and proceeds from the Father, and therefore, He is their joint representative, and so the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. (17) He was to deliver the message of God to the soul, for He was to speak what He had heard God say. (18) He was to show things to come.

Here are eighteen distinct things that Jesus said, on the eve of His departure, about the Holy Spirit. It was the one great topic, upon His mind and heart, and for this gift

to mankind, of God the Spirit, He laid down His life.

Then at the very first meeting of Jesus with the Apostles after His resurrection, in the upper room, on the evening of the resurrection day, He again referred them to the Coming One, saying, "And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

It was also a most natural thing, that in His parting benediction, with His last words, He commended them to the Holy Spirit. After forty days on the earth between the Resurrection and his Ascension, He led the little band out near Bethany, and on the picturesque slopes, or on the top of Mount Olivet, was enacted one of the sublimest and greatest events in the world's history.

The place was fitting to the occasion, and to the enactment of the wonderful drama, for they were on historic ground. On this mount, David had fled from his rebellious son, Absalom. Here Christ had wept over Jerusalem, and had given expression to perhaps the most beautiful language in all literature in his pathetic and eloquent lam-

entation over that city. Here, too, He gave the disciples that wonderful form of prayer called the "Lord's Prayer" in which more distinct ideas are couched than in any similar number of words in our language. On this mountain, He had delivered some of His most important parables, such as that of the Ten Virgins, the parable of The Talents, also of the Sheep and Goats. He met with His little company for the last time, with Bethany and Jerusalem both in sight, the former just at the foot of the southern slope, and the city of the King a little farther removed to the west; Jesus had selected this spot for the closing of His eventful career on the earth; for the delivery of His last message, and for His ascension to the Father. He had many tender things to say to them at that meeting, and spake words fraught with eternal significance. But what were His last words? What did He say just as the law of gravitation was ceasing to operate, and His feet were lifting from the ground, while the gates of Heaven were opening to receive Him, at the command of the words sung by an Angelic company: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up,

ye everlasting doors : and the King of Glory shall come in," and the answer comes back from inside the Golden City from a multitude of the Heavenly hosts, "Who is the King of Glory?" "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory."

But what were the parting words of the triumphant Saviour, on this last momentous occasion? Here they are. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." And having said these words the heavens received Him out of their sight.

When the Lord had ascended, the Apostles returned to Jerusalem, to carry out their instructions, to await the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The whole company of the disciples gathered day by day in the historic upper

room, in prayer and supplication, with their hearts filled with joy, and daily expected the Person whom Jesus said would come. They were neither waiting for the pardon of their sins, nor for a blessing, for they had both, but they were waiting for Him who was to come to abide with them.

On the appointed day He came ; and at His coming there were some wonderful manifestations, as was fitting to usher in so great a dispensation. We need, however, to distinguish between the manifestations and the Person who came ; they were no part of Him ; but were the attending circumstances of His coming into the world ; so far as I know, never to be repeated.

From that time on, the Holy Spirit was taken by the Apostles as their Guide. He was not treated as an emotion, nor as a sentiment in any way, but as a Divine Person, who was as veritably with them as though they could see Him with their outward eyes ; and He became their guide and teacher. All through the Acts of the Apostles, we read of the Holy Spirit telling them to do this, and to leave undone that, to go to one place and not to go to another.

The Holy Spirit told the brethren at Antioch to separate Barnabas and Saul for a special work ; and these brethren were sent by the Holy Spirit to Seleucia and from there to Cyprus. In the first council at Jerusalem on the matter of the Jewish law, they settled the question by the dictates of the Holy Spirit ; as they said, "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to put upon you no greater burden than these necessary things."

Paul and Silas were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia, though it was evidently their intention to do so. The same Spirit suffered them not to go to Bithynia, after, apparently, they had started for that place.

From these sample instances, we see that the Holy Spirit was guide supreme, and they took Him as such.

To the objection that this detailed guidance was for the Apostles only, and not for the common people, I will refer to the words of Peter, who in addressing the masses said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the

Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off."

Then again, Stephen was not an Apostle, but a layman, but he was a man full of the Holy Spirit, and the same thing is true of hundreds of others we read of in the Acts.

It also seems from the Scriptures that not only is the Holy Spirit for everybody, but that some Christians may be in the enjoyment and love of God without knowing the Holy Spirit as a person, or having Him as a conscious Guide and Teacher. And so the new Testament preachers went about asking Christians, if they had received the Holy Spirit since they believed; and when answered in the negative, explained who He was and what He did, and by faith they accepted Him also.

I gather from the Scriptures that God has always had a method of communication with mankind; that spiritual men in all the ages have heard His voice; and that in this last and best dispensation, our privileges in this respect, are greater than ever before.

I have also arrived at the conclusion that this Scriptural doctrine is overlooked, or

neglected in modern teaching, so that many of the Lord's people, through lack of knowledge, do not get the comfort of the Holy Spirit as guide, teacher and empowerer as our Master intended they should.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHURCH NOT AN ULTIMATE GUIDE.

The Holy Spirit succeeded Jesus as teacher and guide.—No right to regard the Church as an infallible guide.—This is one of the first heresies of the Christian community.—To look to the Church for guidance is carnality.—The utmost the Church can give is advice or counsel.—The Holy Spirit the only guide in matters of conscience.—Early in the history of the Church there was a turning away from God's method to that of Councils.—The first Council of the Apostles at Jerusalem.—No authority from Jesus giving Councils the right to bind the conscience.—The Holy Spirit not in the Church as such but in each individual.—Cardinal Manning's book "The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost."—The voice of the Church not necessarily the voice of God.—The Church may have a right to state its doctrines but not to bind the conscience.—To be controlled by the Unseen is the great achievement of faith.—Christianity is simplicity simplified.—Christ did not cumber his followers with complicated laws.—The Church became an awe-inspiring mysterious body.—Freedom of conscience denied.—Putting the Church in the place of the Holy Ghost has been fraught with the gravest evils.

It must be admitted by all who take the New Testament Scriptures as authoritative, and who receive the teachings of Jesus as recorded therein, for the truth, that the

Holy Ghost was to succeed Him as the ultimate teacher and guide of mankind; and using language in a strict sense, He is the only teacher and guide of the Christian under this dispensation. In so far as it applies to spiritual life and Christian living, He is the teacher of all things, and the guide into all truth. Hence, all other supposed guides, must be false guides.

It is not right to regard the Church as an ultimate or infallible teacher and guide as some Christians do. The belief that the Church is the guide of the Christian, is, I think, one of the first heresies of primitive Christianity, and I may add, one of the worst, if not the mother of all the heresies that sprang up in the first century of the Church's history.

The very moment an individual Christian began to look to the organized Church, or to the society of Christians to which he belonged, to find out whether he was right in his actions, or to get sanction for what he was doing, or for guidance for what he ought to do, that moment he disregarded the personal presence of the Holy Spirit, and abandoned God's only method for such

guidance. To do this, a man must fall from grace for the time being at least, or what is the same thing, become carnal and cease to be spiritual.

Why does a Christian seek guidance from a good man, or from any number of good men, whether organized into a Church or not, as to whether he is right in his actions, if he knows that the All-wise God the Holy Spirit dwells in him on purpose to teach him, and to either approve or disapprove of his actions? The utmost a Christian can get from the Church is advice or counsel, but in the final matter of right and wrong, the Holy Spirit is the only guide.

If he were actually spiritual, and discerned the presence of the Holy Spirit, he would have no need to turn to a Church composed of fallible men for endorsation, but because he does so turn and appeals to the Church, it is a proof that he does not know, in answer to Paul's question, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?"

How would it look when Jesus was with the disciples, if John, for instance, while reclining on the bosom of Jesus, and having

doubts on any matter which he wanted settled, should leave the All-wise Son of God, who would gladly answer his question, and should summon Peter to a conference to quiet his troubled soul? Would such an action be honoring to Jesus or show faith in Him as the teacher? If John were first to consult Jesus, and He were to refer him to Peter for an answer, that would be another question, of course, just as in another case when they wanted money to pay their taxes Jesus did not furnish the money direct, but He told them where they might find it.

Hence, when a man turns to the Church, or depends upon the Church in any measure to guide him in matters of right or wrong he becomes anti-Christian, because he puts the Church in the place of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus said should guide.

Now what is true of one individual Christian in this respect is true of two, or of any greater number. The promise and provision is that, "They shall be all taught of God," meaning that each and all should be so taught, and God is jealous of any interference with this, His sovereign prerogative.

We all know that very early in the history

of the Church, if not indeed during the days of the Apostles, there was a turning away from God's method of settling questions, to the worldly method of councils, and the Church councils or courts, soon usurped the place of the Holy Spirit. It is a most interesting study to review the questions brought before the many councils of the Church for the first five hundred years of the Christian era, and to witness the questions with which they struggled.

In my opinion, there is ground for criticism, even on the action of the first council of the Apostles and Elders, held at Jerusalem, to consider the questions, submitted by Paul and Barnabas with others, as to whether the Gentile converts at Antioch, should observe the law of Moses, and there is ground for criticism also of the men who went there to submit the questions.

There is no authority given by Jesus for any council or court to make laws and regulations, binding the conscience of individuals. When such questions had been submitted and settled and the decisions, having the force of law, became binding upon the consciences of Christians, both the councils

making the laws, and the individuals observing them as laws, fell from grace and became carnal, for the law-making bodies took the place of the Holy Spirit, and their followers became followers of men and not of God.

The only Guide and Teacher Jesus appointed for His people was, and is, the Holy Spirit, and He is the teacher and guide to each individual. The doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Church, and I think of the ritualistic branch of the Anglican Church, if not of others, that the Holy Spirit is in the Church as a Church, to guide it infallibly right, and not in the individual as an individual, has no authority in the teaching of Jesus Christ, and the theory stands condemned at the bar of reason.

I have read Cardinal Manning's work "The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost," with great care and no little profit; but he fails to prove his chief point, viz: that the Holy Ghost resides in the Church as a body, and that therefore all the deliverances of the Church, are of Divine authority, and that the Pope, when speaking *ex-cathedra*, is just

as infallible, as God, because he is then the mouthpiece of God.

There is much in this work of Cardinal Manning to be admired, and on the personality of the Holy Ghost and His functions, many Protestants could read the work to their great advantage. The writer of the book is logical in many of his conclusions from the premises before referred to, but his premises, that the voice of the Church is the voice of God, are derived from the early Church councils, and the early departure of the Church from the simplicity of Christ's Gospel, and not from Christ's personal teaching.

The issue was soon raised between God's government of His children as individuals, and His government of them by councils or Church courts, and the latter became victorious, so far as the practice of the Church went.

That a Church has a right to state its doctrines, to have a polity, and to make advisory rules, I do not now deny, but it certainly has no right to take to itself the power to bind the consciences of its members.

The hardest lesson for fallen men to learn, even after conversion, is to recognize the Holy Spirit as a veritable person, and the Guide and Teacher of the individual. It seems difficult to see Him, Who is invisible, to hear without sound, and get instruction without audible conversation, and hence men turn readily to what they can see and hear for their guidance.

To be controlled by an invisible power; to recognize the unseen God, and to be satisfied with His guiding, without appealing to some person or persons in the flesh for confirmation or endorsement, is a spiritual art, and an achievement of faith; possible indeed for all; nay more, the imperative duty of all, and yet history records comparatively few who have been thus spiritual.

But this is the Christianity of Christ, and nothing else is; this is what He taught, but men have sought out many inventions, and have established many substitutes, and one of the earliest, was to put the body of believers or the Church, in the place of The Holy Ghost.

Christianity is simplicity simplified. Christ did not cumber his followers with compli-

cated doctrines or elaborate rules and ceremonies. He gave but few, if any, precepts that were intended as lasting laws; He established no Church rules or discipline; He gave no elaborate "laws for holy living," but laid down principles; He did not pretend to give detailed laws as to duty, but by example and precept, He taught the individual to recognize God, and be guided by Him direct.

His purpose was to bring men back to the spirituality of the Garden of Eden, before the Fall, where the unseen God was as real to Adam and Eve, as though He had been seen with the outward eyes, and been heard with the outward ears. But what was the condition of the Church in a very few years after Christ's death? It was burdened with elaborate laws, ceremonies, doctrines and usages, which were a burden about the necks of Christians, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, and which few understood and none could keep.

The Church itself, gradually became an awe inspiring, mysterious body, and not only assumed the prerogative of the Holy Spirit, but stood actually in the place of God,

to the masses, and became an object of practical idolatry.

Individual liberty and freedom of conscience were denied; the Church as an organized body, undertaking to do the thinking for each and all; and any who would not submit, were anathematized, the thumb-screw, and the rack, following in the Middle Ages in due course.

The doctrine that the guidance of the individual lies in the Church, thus hurling the Holy Ghost from His throne, has been fraught with the gravest evils. It is the mother of heresies, and was the main cause of the corruption of the early Church; it brought on the gross darkness of the middle ages with all the inhuman and disgraceful deeds then performed in the name of Christ's Church; it made the name of Christianity a stench in the nostrils of thinking men of all the civilized nations of the earth, and retarded the coming of Christ's Kingdom, more than all other causes combined.

The protests of Luther, and Melancthon, and Zwingli, and the other reformers of the sixteenth century, against this claim of the Church, is the very pith of Protestantism.

The demand of the reformers was for the right of individual judgment, that each man was responsible to God alone for his beliefs, and that the Church had no right to fetter the thought of Christians. Along with this demand for liberty, the doctrine of justification by faith was vigorously preached, and the Bible was thrown open for the perusal and investigation of each and all alike.

In proportion as these ideas gained right of way, in that proportion the people came back to the simple teachings of Jesus, and the accumulated theological rubbish of the centuries began to be removed from the conscience of Christendom. But only a part of the errors that they had fallen into since Pentecost were seen and pointed out by the reformers, and it is doubtful if Luther and his associates even saw the extreme simplicity of the truth from which the Church had departed, and hence the reform was only partial, and much yet remained to be done.

I think I have said enough to show that the Church was not meant by Jesus, to be the guide of the Christian, and that grave evils resulted to the world, and the cause of righteousness by the practice and preaching

of that doctrine. But if it is true, and I cannot see how it can be disputed, that the Holy Spirit is the sole Guide, then another important question must be discussed in another chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BIBLE NOT AN ULTIMATE GUIDE.

To put the Bible in the place of the Holy Spirit destroys spiritual liberty.—An infallible book substituted for an infallible Church.—The Bible a book of priceless value.—It does not detract from its value to say it does not take the place of God.—The Bible does not claim to be the guide of the Christian.—“The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.”—Jesus is called “the Word” because He declared the mind of God. By implication Jesus taught that the Bible was not to be the guide of the Christian.—There is not a single record in the Apostolic Church of taking the Bible as guide.—They were guided by the Holy Spirit.—Numerous references to the fact of guidance by the Holy Spirit.—See how much is implied in being the guide of the Christian.—The Bible clearly refers us to the true guide.—God’s method of guidance is simple to a child.

The Bible should not be regarded as the ultimate guide of the Christian, in any sense to put it in the place of the Holy Spirit. To so regard the Scriptures is just as grave an error, though not producing such gross public evils, yet fraught with just as much mischief to spiritual liberty, as to regard the Church as guide. The very shock

which this statement will likely make upon the average Christian when first read, is itself strong evidence of its truth; but nevertheless, I hesitate not to say that, if those who are moved to opposition by the statement, will take time to look into it, without prejudice, that they will come into practical harmony with its sentiment. Let us not then jump to opposite conclusions before the evidence is examined, and with prayerful patience, without fear or favor, let us look into the question.

The Church was ordained and instituted of God, for the fellowship and communion of saints, and the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now it is no reflection upon that Divine institution, to say it does not in any sense, take the place of God. Nor does it reflect upon the Christian Church to point out the grave error and idolatry of those who make it stand in the place of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it magnifies the real purpose of the Church and thus glorifies God.

When the reformers shifted the source of Divine guidance from the Church, to the Bible, and gave the individual the right to

interpret the Bible for himself, an immense stride was made back to the teaching of Jesus. The mind of the Christian before fettered, now became free, and many gross outward abuses, were things of the past; and in spite of the fact that an infallible book was substituted for an infallible Church, hundreds of people through the Reformation did get a great spiritual uplift, and became personally acquainted with God.

But when it got settled down into a creed that the Bible was the guide of the Christian, and when individuals acted out their creed, I declare that from a purely spiritual standpoint, this last error was as bad as the first.

To say this, does not detract from the value of the Holy Scriptures, but adds to their value, when properly understood. I take second place to no living man in my appreciation, up to the measure of my capacity, of the Bible; it is the Book of books. It is a history of God's dealings with His people, with various invaluable accounts of His revelations to them. It contains the great principles upon which God governs mankind, morally and spiritually. It de-

monstrates in a variety of ways, the fact that it is always well with all men who are true to God, and that it is ill with all who persist in disobeying Him. It points out the rocks upon which men have made shipwreck on the voyage of life, and reveals the open water where there is safe sailing. It is a history of Jesus with His plan of human redemption, and with the record of the establishment of the Christian Church on day of Pentecost. It is a mine of truth which seems inexhaustible; and it furnishes supplies for all sorts and conditions of men.

All this, and a great deal more can be truthfully claimed for the wonderful Book, but it is still a book and not God. It is the Father's letter to His children, made necessary by man's fall from spirituality, but not the letter of an absent father. It is an outward and sensible reminder to mankind of the perpetual presence of the invisible God. If man had not sinned, and lost his spiritual faculties, there would have been no need for such a reminder, nor would there have been any use for a law regulating his conduct, for in that case, man would have been con-

trolled instinctively, or at least directly, by God, as in the beginning. That the Bible is not the guide of the Christian, I gather from the following, among many other reasons.

The Bible does not claim to be the guide of the Christian. Under the Mosaic dispensation, it seems clear that God did give certain laws for the government of the people, but these laws were given because of the hardness of their hearts. That is, their spiritual faculties were so dead, they could not perceive a purely spiritual law, but as we learn from Paul, the written law was only meant to be temporary, in the absence of something better. He states that the law was the schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. Whatever may have been the precise nature of God's method of guidance in the past, the Old Testament Scriptures breathe with the expectation of a better day, when the law, instead of being upon tables of stone or upon parchments, was to be written upon human hearts. In other words, the day was coming when God would write His directions upon the heart of each individual; when it would not be

necessary for one man to get instruction for another, for "They shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

But even under this old dispensation, we have abundant evidence that God was the Guide of His people and not the law. Individuals who were spiritual, came direct to God for guidance without any medium, while of course, people who were not spiritual, had to get the mind of God through the Priest with the Urim and Thummim, or otherwise.

"The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths," are sample passages concerning even Old Testament guidance, which condemn many persons living under our brighter dispensation, who confine the voice of God to the Bible, and practically forbid God speaking direct to them or to others.

It is most remarkable, how Scripture is wrested from its proper meaning, to make it bolster up this idolatrous notion of the blessed Bible. Take those numerous passages referring to the "Word of the Lord."

They are most generally quoted as meaning the Bible, but they rarely, if ever, mean anything of the sort.

I will be thankful if any person can point out to me, anywhere in the Bible where the expression "The word of God" is used meaning the letter of the sacred Scriptures. Generally, the obvious meaning is, what God has told the individual or, what the Holy Spirit communicates to the soul.

Even when God gives a message to one man for another, it is not the word of God to the second man, until God in some way, makes the second man know that the message is from Him.

Jesus is called the "Word," because in His person, and in His message, He declared the mind and will of God, speaking with authority, and giving the necessary evidence to convince the world that He was indeed the teacher of God to mankind.

Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit was to be the Guide of the Christian and therefore by implication, that the Bible was not to be the guide.

It seems clear to me, and I do not see why it should not be clear to every unprej-

udiced investigator of this subject, that if Jesus meant the Bible to become the guide of His people after His departure, He would have said something about it. But there is not a word said about it by Him, and nothing that can be construed to mean any such thing.

If He had intended to commit the teaching and guidance of His followers to the Bible, He would not have left them to find that out after the lapse of centuries. And, it is a notable fact, that Jesus did not leave a word of written direction behind Him. If He had meant His people to be guided by such direction, it would seem highly probable, that He would have written something Himself to be read after He had gone. Nor did He give directions to have anything written by others in the nature of a guide book, for His future followers. But what did He do? Did He leave them on life's ocean, without rudder or compass to steer by? Did He start them on an unknown journey without a guide? Did He commit them to the temptations of the world, the flesh and the Devil, without instructions concerning the spiritual battle? Did He leave them to solve life's problems without

a teacher, or to undergo the trials of life without a comforter? Certainly not, for He loved His people too well to leave them without making ample provision for their needs on the journey of life.

He made much better provision for their guidance than constituting a book as their guide, even so wonderful and matchless a book as the Bible. He left an Omnipresent and All-wise Spirit, in charge of them, whose work it is to attend the Christian's footsteps along the whole length of the road, and to supply his every need of body, spirit, soul. An ever-present, loving, almighty companion, to whom the followers of Jesus can turn with the rapidity of thought, under all circumstances, and be sure of infallible direction.

See how plain the words of Jesus are concerning the guidance of the Holy Spirit; so plain that it is beyond comprehension, how those who love Him, have overlooked His teaching, and have chosen other guides, and have so taught about the Bible being the guide, that thousands to-day accept it rather than the Holy Spirit.

Mark 13:11. "But when they shall lead

you and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand, what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit."

Luke 12:11, 12. "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer or what ye shall say: for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."

John 14:17. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive; because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

John 15:26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me."

John 16:13. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of

Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak ; and He will show you things to come." And His last words before His ascension, previously referred to are, Acts 1 : 8, " But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

In fullest harmony with what Jesus said, were the actions of His disciples in the earliest years of the Church. Christ's followers received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and then began to walk in Him, or what is the same thing, to be guided by Him.

Christ's immediate followers did not pretend to take the Bible as guide, but they were guided by the Holy Spirit. Let us take a few sample instances.

Acts. 8 : 29. " Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot." Philip did as the Holy Spirit told him to do, and when he got through with the work God had for him to do, the same Spirit told him to leave the man he had been instructing unto himself ; the record

is Acts 8:39. "The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more."

In the case of the conversion of Saul, and after that experience had been received by him, but prior to any knowledge on his part of the Holy Spirit, as a distinct person; the Lord appeared to the disciple Ananias, telling him to go to Saul's boarding-house to instruct him about matters of the Kingdom, and especially that he might receive the Holy Spirit for his guide.

Acts 9:11. "And the Lord said unto him (Ananias), Arise and go into the street that is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold he prayeth."

When God had Gospel work to be done in the home of Cornelius, and wanted Peter to do it, the Holy Spirit made him acquainted with the fact. Peter had a remarkable vision to get him ready for the message of the Spirit, and the record is Acts 10:19. "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold three men seek thee."

In giving an account of this afterwards to

the Apostles at Jerusalem, Peter says, Acts 11:12, "And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting;" and he went, for it is always safe to obey God.

While the leaders of the Church at Antioch were engaged in a prayer meeting, Acts 13:2, "The Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," and they had the wisdom to obey without debate. And just as one would expect in a Spirit of wisdom, He also told Barnabas and Saul what He wanted of them, for we read, Acts 13:4, "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, departed unto Seleucia, and from thence they sailed to Cyprus," doubtless being guided all the way by the ever-present Spirit.

That the Holy Spirit is given for a guide in every detail, we infer from the fact recorded, Acts 16:6-7. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." The Holy Spirit cannot be limited as to the

medium by which He communicates His instructions, and so when He wanted Paul to go to Macedonia, He talked to him in a vision through a man of that country, Acts 16: 9-10. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them."

But why multiply instances of God's method of guidance? The few I have referred to will stir up others in your minds, and they demonstrate with certainty that God's plan of guidance is through the Holy Ghost alone. God will not, and we must not, allow any rival guide, no matter if as sacred an institution as the Church, or as blessed a book as the Bible.

In the very nature of things the Bible cannot be a competent guide. This will be seen at a glance by seeing how much is involved in being the guide of a Christian. Such a guide must be able to instruct the Christian at all times, under all circum-

stances, in all ages of the world, how to act, so as to please God. Ten thousand different circumstances arise in a Christian's experience, concerning which he needs to know how to act in order to be well pleasing to God. Nothing is too trivial for God to notice affecting the life of one of His children, for as Jesus said, "The very hairs of your heads are numbered."

There is a certain attitude a Christian ought to take to every event which affects him, and all other attitudes will be wrong. He should go to a certain place, or not go; he should do a certain thing or not do it; he should do a certain kind of Christian work or he should not; certain pleasures are right or they are wrong. There is a right time and a right way to do a certain duty, and there is a wrong time and a wrong way to do it. There is a certain way which God wants him to act under every circumstance, and to act in any other way, is contrary to God's plan, and therefore displeasing to God. There is no use in referring him to experience, reason or common sense for an answer to such questions, as they are beyond the ken of these natural faculties.

Now then, if God expects us to do right and not wrong under all circumstances, that is, to do the thing He wants us to do; how can He expect such obedience except He makes it possible for us to know His will concerning every such event? But where is the man who is foolish enough to say that the Bible makes detailed provision for every contingency in human life, in which it is possible to either please or displease God?—that is, that the Bible itself contains sufficient directions to cover every possible contingency without going outside of its lids?

And yet the Bible does refer us to the source whence guidance can be had, for it directs that, "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." The Bible does direct to the true Guide, but it is not itself that Guide. The Bible does refer us to the Teacher of spiritual wisdom, but does not claim that distinction for itself. The Bible does point out the Physician, but the most it claims for itself is that, it is the prescription.

A book to have detailed instructions as to

duty-doing, under all circumstances, for every individual would need to be a thousand times as large as the Bible, and then the mind of man would need to be infinite to memorize it all in order to be guided by it.

How much better is God's method, which is so simple that "The wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." Jesus our Master, exulted over this thought when he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

A child can take in the thought, that God the Holy Spirit is with him to teach him and guide him, and a child can know enough to be guided in this way; but the other method demands a person with an exhaustive education, a strong intellect, an iron will, and then only to find out that the so-called method of Divine guidance, is no guidance at all, and that he has miserably failed to do the will of God notwithstanding all his painful efforts.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD.

Provision has been made for solving all spiritual problems.

—Concerning the nature of sin.—Sin is the transgression of the law ; but which law?—Sin is that thought or act which displeases God.—An act to be sinful must be under the control of the will.—Acts that are not avoidable cannot be sinful.—Sin does not consist in the outward act.—Acts right in one age may be wrong in another.—To do some things now that Jesus did, may be sinful.—Even human laws interpret acts according to the motive.—The killing of a man does not necessarily constitute murder.

IN God's economy of Salvation, we are not left to grope our way in the dark, as to either duty on the one hand, or privilege on the other. Our God is not an absent God, but one "In whom we live and move and have our being." Provision has been made by Him for solving all spiritual problems which are necessary to be solved, and we are exhorted "If we lack wisdom to ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." On the question of sin, as I have elsewhere stated, there are

many strange and conflicting theories, and yet it seems to me, the New Testament explains the subject with such simplicity, that there is no need for the strange theories which have been conceived concerning it.

Concerning the nature of sin, it may be well to start with the scriptural definition. The Bible declares that "Sin is the transgression of the law," and in another place that, "All unrighteousness is sin"; that is, I take it, sin is a transgression of the law of God, but what particular law, it is not so easy to say. Whatever may have been its original reference, it certainly cannot refer now to the Mosaic or ceremonial law; it cannot refer now to any of the laws under the Old Testament dispensation, for that dispensation has been succeeded by a better. Hence, I take it, that under this New Testament dispensation, namely the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the will of God as revealed by the Spirit, is the law of God concerning us, as regards our duty in the various incidents of our lives, so that sin is the transgression of the law of the Spirit. As to the second scriptural definition, that "All unrighteousness is sin," that states the

same truth in another way and must mean, that all thoughts or actions, which do not make for the ultimate good of our fellows, or ourselves, or for the glory of God, are sinful.

For the purpose of clearness, and to prevent unnecessary controversy, the definition which I will give of sin, is that thought, word or deed, which displeases God. This definition is clear, it gives my conception of sin, I also think it in harmony with the Scriptures, and I shall use the word sin in this sense in the present chapter.

I will not enter into a discussion of the moral quality of regenerated human nature apart from volition and action, or in a quiescent state, as such a discussion must necessarily be metaphysical and theoretical and would not serve any practical purpose.

Whether we are born with natures like white blank paper, with nothing written on them either good or evil, or whether we are born with natures tainted and corrupt is a matter beyond our control, and neither blame nor praise can attach to us in any event. The horrible doctrine taught by some of the fathers of the Church and referred to in a

former chapter, that, on account of original depravity, " 'There are infants in hell a span long ' " makes God a monster for our detestation rather than for our love and reverence, but happily there is no such God.

What is the precise moral quality of our spiritual nature after we have been adopted into God's family, I leave others to decide, only I must insist that it is not blameworthy, and it is such a nature that enables God to be pleased with its possessor.

In my opinion, no act or thought can displease God, which is not under the control of the will of the individual. There are a great many thoughts and even actions beyond our control, which I think God does not hold us responsible for, and which therefore are not sinful. It is not conceivable that God holds a man responsible who has lost his reason, no matter what his thoughts or acts are; and to whatever extent improper thoughts or actions may be a result of our imperfect reasoning they cannot be sinful. I do not think God would record sin against a Christian man for example, for any thoughts or experiences he may go through in the shape of dreams, no matter what their

character may be, inasmuch as, so far as I know, dreams are not controlled by the will, and therefore we are not responsible for them, providing our waking thoughts are right.

Then, a Christian man with sound reason and undoubted integrity will often have involuntary thoughts concerning evil, and indeed, all sorts of thoughts concerning evil may pass through his mind, but such thoughts not being at all under the control of his will cannot be sinful. I therefore take it, that *every sin, must be an* AVOIDABLE *act*, for those thoughts or acts, which are unavoidable coming or committed through mental weakness, or ignorance, or through lapses of memory, or through any other human infirmity, a Christian man cannot be responsible for.

It is possible that some of these infirmities may spring from heredity, or may be the result of sin in a man's early life, but when God forgave him for all the sins which he had committed, and adopted him into His family, He accepted him just as he was, and though these weaknesses and frailties referred to, may be in some measure

the result of sin either in himself or in his forefathers, yet they are not now under the control of his will, and therefore such acts cannot be displeasing to God, so far as the individual is concerned.

You take the case of a drunkard who comes to God for forgiveness; and is freely forgiven. His name has been written in the Lamb's Book of Life; his sins have been blotted out; he is adopted into God's family; and yet this same man often finds in himself a craving for liquor, not with the consent of his will but under its strong protest. Now it is past my comprehension of our Heavenly Father, to suppose that He will record sin against that poor man every time he has this craving, notwithstanding that the craving itself, was the result of his former sinful life. Undoubtedly, if this craving for liquor so influences him that he yields to temptation, and knowingly sins against God, then he has fallen from grace; but without the consent of his will, in thus yielding, I think God will hold him innocent. I am not even sure, but what some men may get drunk with as little moral turpitude as

others who innocently contract typhoid fever.

Acts, therefore, not avoidable, cannot be sinful. It may help to bring out this idea more clearly, to say that there is no moral quality in acts themselves, apart from a human agent and the motives prompting them. Just as there is no such thing as light without an eye, or sound without an ear, so there can be no moral quality without a moral agent. For instance, those habits which in birds and animals are normal and legitimate, in man may be vicious and sinful; therefore moral quality is not in the act itself. Sin cannot consist in the mere outward act, but must be determined by the motive. It is worth repeating that falsehood does not necessarily consist in telling what is not so, for if a man tells what is not true to fact, but conscientiously believes that it is, he is truthful, while on the other hand, if a man tells what is true to fact with the intent and purpose to deceive, that man is a liar.

Then some acts under certain circumstances may be sinful, and under others, innocent. The merchant who unwittingly

demands and accepts payment the second time for goods, not knowing that they had been previously paid for, does not sin, however much he may be deficient in business ability ; while he who does the same thing with full knowledge of the facts, is a thief. But again, acts which are pleasing to God in one age are often sinful in another age. Many of the laws of God, have been temporary ; they have been wise under the circumstances in which the people were situated, when God gave the laws ; but with different people under different circumstances, these laws are not binding ; and indeed he who would attempt to keep some of these laws may sin against God, notwithstanding that at one time they were just and equal. And the converse of this proposition is equally true, for certain habits, in one age may be innocent, but with the lapse of time and change of circumstances become vicious. That Jesus drank wine, even if it were real or intoxicating in its nature, and pleased God perfectly in so doing, is no proof that a man can to-day do the same thing and not displease God. Indeed I can imagine a man copying Jesus in this and in many other

things and grievously sinning against God by these very actions.

That the saints of God in other dispensations had a number of wives with God's permission and approval is no evidence at all that a man to-day can have more than one wife and be innocent. Nor on the other hand does it detract from the virtue and the beauty of the character of the wife of Enoch Arden because she married another man while her first husband was living, she thinking him to have been dead for many years. From these considerations I think it will be agreed by all, that one man may with innocence do a thing, which another could not do without condemnation, so that there is no moral quality in acts themselves. God judges or pronounces upon their merits from the motives which prompt them, and not from the deeds themselves.

And still a step further; I can conceive that even those acts whose tendency is harmful, if prompted by good motives, namely love to God and love to man, may not be sinful. I have read a story of an indiscreet man, who walked ten miles at great personal inconvenience, prompted by love to his

friend, to tell him a piece of bad news, and the shock was so great, that his friend being in delicate health, it caused his death. Now, we may pronounce upon the bad judgment of that man, but I think no man will dare say that God would necessarily register sin against him, notwithstanding that his indiscreet action caused the death of his friend.

Some Christian Churches still keep up, what I think is a pernicious practice, the use of fermented wine at the Communion service, and I believe that this practice often results in grave evils to Christian men, who have been saved from drunkards' lives, but who still have the appetite for liquor ; and yet I should be very sorry to say that God necessarily records sin against such Churches, for they think they are in harmony with the Scriptures and are doing the will of God. It cannot be that God will record sin against any man, no matter what the act is, if it be performed with honest Godly motive.

Even human laws interpret acts by the motives prompting them. It is not an unusual occurrence to hear of men killing other men, and they are not regarded as murderers. Under my own observation recently a young

man took a gun and deliberately aimed it at his invalid mother, deliberately pulled the trigger, and shot her dead. Now, this man was not even arrested, because it was learned beyond dispute that he thought the gun was empty, also that he was passionately fond of his mother, and was doing this in fun, and for her amusement, while what happened almost drove him crazy. The law of the land recognized that this man had no expectation whatever of committing murder, and that his motive to amuse his mother was a good one, and hence he was not punished in any way. On the other hand, if he had committed the same deed with the motive to kill, the law would have hanged him by the neck until he was dead. Thus all good human laws are founded upon the Divine Law, for God judges by motives, and not necessarily by actions.



CHAPTER XVIII.

POPULAR NOTIONS OF SIN.

Sin is not so subtle that it can be committed without knowing it.—That the thoughts of the best men are necessarily tinged with sin, is a grave error.—To teach that Christians necessarily sin in thought, word and deed is unscriptural.—This would be salvation in sin rather than from sin.—The normal passions of the body not sinful.—There is no sin in being tempted.—A man loving God with all his heart cannot sin.—The notion that the “Robe of Christ’s righteousness” covers sin in the Christian is unscriptural. It is not difficult to please God.—Some of the creeds cannot be lived up to, for man is a hard master.—“If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.”

MANY popular notions of sin, are mediæval and theological, but are, I think, anti-Scriptural, and particularly opposed to the teaching of Jesus. The notion that sin is such a subtle thing that Christians commit it without knowing, and the opinion that the best thoughts of the best men are tinged with sin, are not according to the Scriptures, and I am sure are great hindrances to spiritual progress and loving fellowship with God.

That of necessity Christians constantly sin in thought, word, and deed, is a doctrine dishonoring to God and belittling to the work of Christ, in that it is a reflection upon the completeness of the salvation provided by the love of the Father, and wrought out by the love and suffering of the Son.

Logically, it is a salvation in sin, but the salvation taught in the Bible is a salvation from sin. As evidence of this take a sample passage among hundreds: "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and *cause* you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them." There is no room here for sin in either "Thought, word, or deed," and I believe that God can do all He undertakes.

In my opinion, none of the passions and appetites of the human body are naturally sinful; in fact there is no necessary moral quality in them as they are purely animal. They inhere in the body and not in the soul.

Adam before the fall had the same kind of original human nature that we have, and all those appetites and passions which are popularly supposed to be sinful, and for which many Christians take condemnation, existed in him in his innocency. In fact, if we may predicate moral quality, of those things which are natural and animal, they are good and not evil, for they are as God made them and work out His holy purposes. It has been surprising to me that many good men pronounce as evil, what God pronounces good. That these appetites and passions may be a means of sin, or temptation to sin, is undoubtedly true. That they often do lead to sin, as do other natural gifts of God, is doubtless so, but to stamp them in themselves as sinful, I think is a reflection upon the workmanship of God, and plays into the hands of the Devil.

I would also remark that no temptation in itself is sinful. Temptations to sin are permitted by God, as educational processes to develop our will power and our strength of character, and give us opportunities to test the grace and the power of God; but they are not sinful no matter how strong they

may be, or from what quarter they may come. Temptations whether arising from one's own nature, or from the outward senses, or straight from the Devil, are not sinful, for it is said of Jesus that, "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." But, certainly many Christians do take condemnation to themselves when they are tempted, and in this they are aided and backed up by the enemy of our souls, and the peace and communion which should constantly exist between the soul and God is frequently interrupted. From the above and many similar considerations, I conclude that no thought or act can displease God, except the consent of our will to sin is first obtained, and further that the knowledge of this would tend to make Christians a conquering host, instead of an army most of the time in the hospital.

I will now make the statement, that if a man is fully in love with God he CANNOT sin, be he ever so ignorant. Some persons, act above man's reproach and doubtless sin constantly, because their polished manners and careful outward conduct, are prompted by impure motives ; while on the other hand

some persons whose acts in themselves look faulty and blameworthy, are well pleasing to God. Outward conformity to the rules of good conduct and good actions, is largely the result of education and culture, and of a man's surroundings; but God looks deeper than outward conduct and the rough exterior which to us looks so faulty. He heeds but little, for if He sees in the heart purity of intent, with love to God, as the dominating principle, He is well pleased.

The notion that Christians constantly sin but that in some fanciful way, their sins are covered up with the robe of Christ's righteousness, is I believe unphilosophical, unscriptural, and untenable. Jesus came into the world, not to cover up sin in man, but to cure it; He came not to hide sin in His followers but to exterminate it. His mission is not to put His robe of righteousness around an impure and unholy man, and to give him an outward show of goodness; but He came to work righteousness in the inward parts; He came to destroy the works of the Devil, and to make new men. He makes the sick well, and not simply a little better; He came to turn bad men into good men. He came

to make sinners into saints, and He does this in no sham way, but in a real way, so that when Jesus finishes His work upon a man, God looks upon him and sees His own image. He looks him through and through and is pleased with him. Pleased with his thoughts, with his words, with his deeds; and as He said about His Son Jesus, who is the first-born among many brethren, so He says about each new son, "This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

I certainly believe that while many real Christians hold such notions about sin in themselves, and in other Christians, they are a great deal better than their creed, for although they write such bitter things against themselves, it is a fortunate thing for them that God does not write the same things about them.

The notion which these dear people have about the difficulty of pleasing God, and doing the will of God and living without sin, is contrary to the Scriptures, as well as to the declaration of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light," whereas this theory makes it hard. The question is, "Is God an easy or a hard

master to please?" Does He bid us perform tasks impossible of fulfilment? Does He bind heavy burdens upon weak shoulders? Does He bid us do the impossible and then blame us because we cannot do it? I think not. I think God is of all beings the most reasonable, and of all masters, the easiest. Our creeds and theologies and accumulation of notions, have so enshrouded the subject of religion with mists and fogs, and have so encumbered it with duties and obligations, that it is hard for one to divest himself of these theories, and see the exceeding simplicity of the Gospel, and see the loving Fatherhood of God, and practically experience what Jesus said, that His yoke is easy, and His burden light. Yokes are bound again about the necks of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

According to the New Testament and its teaching concerning the requirements of God, living without sin is the natural and normal condition of the Christian. It is as easy to do as it is to breathe. Indeed, John puts it stronger, for he said, "He that is born of God CANNOT commit sin; for His

seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This looks to be reasonable, for the fruit will be according to the seed, and a man with the seed of the Holy God in him, certainly will not sin. A man without this seed, no matter what his excellencies, must constantly sin, but John says again, " He that sinneth is not born of God." They that have the evil seed in them will bear evil fruit and they that have the good seed, good fruit. A man born of black parents will be black, while he that is born of white parents will be white. " Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

The teaching of the Master on this matter, is in harmony with that of John, in harmony with common sense, and should be in harmony with Christian experience. The fruit of a Christian man is obedience to God ; while sin is thinking and doing, contrary to the will of God in each particular circumstance. To be obedient to God is the natural

and normal condition of the man who is born of God, and to teach the contrary is certainly to differ with the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Still while I thus speak it is certainly true, that if we measure our duty by the various creeds, if we put ourselves under obligation to do what a great many good people think we ought to do, if we try to measure up to the standard others may set for us, if we aim to do the thousand and one things which Christians are urged to do, and if we think all these are requirements of God, we shall constantly be under condemnation. Or if we get ideals of Christian life, or Christian feeling, or Christian thought or sentiment, from any source other than the Holy Spirit, we shall fall short of measuring up to these ideals, for man and the Devil are hard taskmasters; but if we conceive of sin as doing that which God forbids, and of Holiness as doing that which He commands, and if we realize that the Holy Spirit is constantly with us to direct us and give us power, and if we have the heart and disposition to obey the Holy Spirit, we shall find that God's standard for

us is one which we can reach, that the duties which God requires are those which we can perform, that His requirements any honest man can conform to, and we may live constantly with the assurance that God is well pleased with us.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW TO DETECT SIN.

God cannot look on sin with any degree of allowance.—No human being is an infallible judge of what is sin.—A man cannot always judge right, even in his own case.—Many sincere persons condemn themselves when God does not condemn them.—“The Devil is the accuser of the brethren.”—Abraham offering up his son Isaac.—We must get God’s verdict upon all our actions.—How may we know the voice of God?—We know God’s voice by experience, the same as we do any other voice.—“My sheep hear My voice.”—The Holy Spirit convinces of sin.—“The Scriptures are a sufficient rule of faith and practice” because they refer us to God.—The Bible not a book of rules but of principles.—Spiritual truth is revealed only by the Holy Spirit.

I WILL now proceed to discuss the question, how to detect sin; how to pronounce upon our actions, as to whether they are pleasing or displeasing to God, how to distinguish right from wrong, and to be certain of the right way, so as to please God in all things.

In the first place, I must say that God cannot look on sin with any degree of allow-

ance. Sin is that thing which God hates. God is a jealous God, and will have all the heart or none. He will not, in my opinion, wink even at ONE sin. Christians should be clean, pure, good, true, honest, upright men, having a conscience void of offence toward God and man. Yet, while this is so, no merely human being can be an infallible judge of what is right and what is wrong, because we cannot properly weigh motives. We may see what the actions of men are, but as a rule, we cannot judge of motives, nor see the conscience of the man who performs the actions. To judge of motives, is God's prerogative, and he who impugns any man's motives without getting the mind of God usurps the authority of God.

Now, while this remark will be readily admitted concerning the motives of other men, I go a step further and say that a man cannot even be a sure judge of his own thoughts or motives nor in certain cases of his actions. Such is the subtlety of our feelings, and the seductiveness of our reasoning, that under different states of mind and feeling, we change our opinions of our own acts. Certain thoughts and propensities

when we are in certain states of mind, seem to be right; while under other states of mind, they are doubtful; and then again they look entirely wrong. This process is often reversed, starting first with an adverse verdict and finishing up with one of approval. The great question is: "How can a man infallibly judge, so that on the one hand he will not call right what God calls wrong, and on the other hand, call wrong what God calls right?"

I certainly believe that many conscientious people pronounce judgment against themselves, when God does not pronounce against them. It must not be overlooked in this connection that "The Devil is the accuser of the brethren," and if a conscientious person is in doubt concerning any thought or motive, the wicked one will not be slow in using his influence along the line of condemnation.

Now does it seem reasonable that God intends to leave us in such a doubtful position as this? Surely, there must be some way by which a Christian can get authoritative judgment at such times; and I am glad to know that there is a way. The Bible says,

"If any man lacks wisdom let him ask of God," and at such a stage as here contemplated, "Wisdom is the principal thing"; but it should be clear to all, that whatever wisdom is necessary can be had for the asking.

Our temptations are permitted doubtless for a wise purpose, and as before remarked, they are educative, but we should be careful not to pronounce sin against ourselves, when we are going through this process of training in the Providence of God. Our feelings and motives are seductive, and cannot be trusted either to approve or condemn, and certainly when we are conscious that we have honesty of purpose to serve God, we should go to a higher tribunal than our own doubting hearts or an enemy before we take condemnation.

But it certainly takes more than human wisdom for a Christian to understand some of the temptations and experiences which beset him in life. It cannot be that God will ever lead His child to do that which is wrong, but He may cause him to do that which to his finite reasoning may *look* like it, and yet after all not be so.

Take for example the case of Abraham: he was distinctly told by God to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. If Abraham had been governed by the creed even of the age in which He lived, he would have seen that to slay his son was murder, and to commit murder was sinful: but he realized that God distinctly told him to do that thing, and so proceeded to carry it out, notwithstanding it could not be harmonized with his ideas of right and wrong. He simply knew that to obey God was safe, and I believe expected that God would stay his hand before the actual deed was done, just as it turned out.

If Abraham is an example of the way God allows His children to be tempted, we cannot always tell, with certainty, by any reasoning process or by any creed, whether temptations are right or wrong: and the only thing we can do, is to be sure that we are obeying the voice of God, and though that may *seem* to be taking us along a line which may not be approved of by our own ideas, or those of the best people, we may be sure that it is only seeming, for God will not permit us to *do* anything that is morally

wrong. Hence, our attitude in all such times of temptation is to look to God, and to do His bidding, and not be governed by our own merely human notion of things, and we may be sure that the sequel will be well pleasing to God, to good men and the angels, as in the case of Abraham.*

But how may we know the voice of God? Precisely the same way as we know the voice of our most familiar friend, and how that is I cannot explain, except to say that, the knowledge comes by experience. Any man who takes the position that God cannot, or will not, make Himself understood to one of His children in the matter of duty, is a practical infidel. God speaks to the Christian all along the journey of life the same

* There is no doubt danger in this teaching, to persons who are not really spiritual or acquainted with God, or right in their minds; just as a road may be very dangerous for the blind and yet be the best road for the seeing, or just as sharp-edge tools, and powerful explosives, are dangerous to lunatics, children and careless persons, but are absolutely essential for the highest good of humanity under modern conditions. In fact there is danger in all privilege, and in all duty-doing, and the more exalted the privilege, or the duty, the greater the danger. But in the finality of things, our only safety is to obey God and be true to the light He gives; and the dangers of this course are only incidental and generally, if not always, avoidable.

as He did at the beginning when He told him his sins were forgiven. Jesus said, the sheep hear his voice, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.

Take the case of Peter in his vision while tarrying at the city of Joppa. In that vision, God bade him to do what his creed told him was sinful; the voice said, "Arise, Peter, slay and eat;" and he said, "Not so, Lord, for nothing common or unclean, hath at any time entered into my mouth;" but the voice answered him again, "Fear not, what God hath cleansed, call thou not common." Here we have it clearly set forth, that the voice of God must be obeyed, and not creed or our human opinion; for creeds and human opinions may be wrong, but God is never wrong. Sin is a deadly thing, and God hates it, but God alone can absolutely determine what sin is, and when we commit it. Hence, God alone must approve or condemn the thoughts or actions of the individual Christian.

This certainly is Christ's teaching, for He said, when the Holy Spirit came, that He would convince of sin, of righteousness, and

of judgment. That is, I take it, He will convince us when we do wrong; He will show the world and the individual what sin is, and will convince us when we do right, and give us clear judgment to discern between the evil and the good. The Holy Spirit, Jesus said, would teach us all things, and His teaching must be pre-eminently on matters of right and wrong, on acts which please God, and on those acts which displease Him. Hence, the Christian who recognizes the Holy Spirit in his life, and is convinced of the Spirit's personality and abiding presence, and leans upon His teaching and follows His guiding hand, will in all cases have Him, and no other person, pronounce upon the character of his actions and the quality of his thoughts.

The Scriptures are, I believe, a sufficient rule of faith and practice, inasmuch as they refer us to God, the only absolute rule. The Scriptures are not to take the place of God, but to lead us to God; they are not the guide, though they are a good guide-book. The Scriptures themselves are not the Physician, they are the prescription, they are not in themselves even the medicine, but

they tell where the medicine can be procured. The Scriptures are neither God nor guide, but they point out the only God and reveal the only True Guide ; but he who expects to find in the letter of the Scriptures full directions for every emergency in life, dishonors the teaching of the good book, practically dethrones God, and will die a disappointed man.

The Scriptures contain the history of the Church of God, and hand down to us the record of the various dispensations and the laws that God made to govern such dispensations. But as we all know, the Scriptures of necessity approve of some actions in one place, and disapprove of them in another, and are consistent in so doing. He who obeys God's commands is holy, while he who disobeys is a sinner ; but God's commands must necessarily vary with varying circumstances. Bible principles never change, but the application of them must change of necessity. Jesus gave the only two commandments that never change, and they are always binding : namely, love to God and love to man ; but no man can carry out even these without the wisdom and power of God.

A change of orders or commands is seen even in the short history of Jesus upon the earth. At one period, he wisely forbade his disciples to take staff or scrip or make any provision for their journey, or take anything to defend themselves with ; and at another period and under different circumstances, he said to them, " When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything ? " And they said, " Nothing." Then said He unto them, " But now he that hath a purse, let him take it and likewise his scrip : and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one," and both commands were doubtless wise under the different circumstances. He, however, who would now attempt to keep one of these commands as he goes on a journey for God must disobey the other ; but he who takes the Bible as a history of the way in which God has guided in the past, and is governed by the same principles as holy men of God were then governed, will find that the Scriptures are of exceeding great value, for he will, as these holy men did, take God as his guide, and permit Him to direct in all the emergencies of life.

The Bible, as I have said, is not a book of rules, but a book of principles which are applicable, I believe, to all the varying conditions of human life, but no mere man can always apply these principles. God Himself must interpret the Book of God. The New Testament for instance is full of Jesus, His wonderful sayings, and mighty works ; and yet no man can possibly *know* Jesus from the letter of the Bible. No man can know Jesus as the Christ, or even understand His teaching, from reading the records in the same sense as a man may know Napoleon I. from reading his history, for " No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Renan and Strauss, and other philosophers, who have written so beautifully, and in such an appreciative way about the life of Jesus, but were not themselves Christians, knew no more about the Christ of God, than a blind man does about colors, or a deaf man about music. It takes the cathode rays of the Holy Ghost to penetrate through the flesh of the historic Christ in order to reveal the Christ of God.

Peter's knowledge of Christ, was not obtained by observation or experience in the

company of Jesus, or by any human method; for when he confessed that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus said, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven." The reason most men did not know Him, was because they did not know God, for God is the only Being, who can reveal Him. Jesus said, "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also," and when He was foretelling to the Apostles the persecutions and martyrdoms which they should meet with, He said, "All these things will they do unto thee, because they have neither known Me, or My Father."

Spiritual truth is revealed only by the Holy Spirit. Sin and holiness are disobedience or obedience to spiritual law, and God the Holy Spirit must pronounce upon the one and upon the other, before we can be infallibly sure of their character. Taking it for granted that he will not deliberately sin, no conscientious Christian therefore has a right to record sin against himself, without the witness of the Spirit that he has sinned. And on the other hand no man has a right to count on God's approval

without the witness of the Spirit to that effect.

It will be readily seen that this reasoning and its application is only for conscientious Christians, persons who hate sin, and will not, and do not deliberately commit it; and while all others know when they sin, yet even these do not realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin, until the Holy Spirit reveals them to themselves.

We cannot be too strict with ourselves even if we are sure that we have the mind of God; but we must avoid calling common and unclean what God has cleansed, as we must avoid calling that clean, which he pronounces unclean. God promises to keep His children from falling, and the presumption is that He will do so, which remark leads me to the discussion of another important question.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW TO KEEP FROM SINNING.

No new ideas advanced in this book.—I have simply sought for the old paths.—In order to keep from sinning we must believe such a thing to be possible.—Faith in the power of God is the answer.—Our first act of faith cleansed us from our sins, that act, kept up, keeps us clean.—The Holy Spirit dwells in us to keep us from sinning.—We must believe that He does so keep us.—The Holy Spirit must be allowed to make His own laws for us.—We cannot start as an experiment but it must be an eternal covenant.—Our faith must not depend upon sight.—It must be an absolute abandonment of ourselves to the Unseen.—Our faith will be justified by results.

I HAVE advanced, I think, no new ideas in discussing this subject, and I have no new theory to advance in the study of the subject of the present chapter. The utmost I aim at, is to go back to first principles, and to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. I simply urge all to do as I aim to do, to "Seek for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Now in order to keep from sinning, there must be first of all the belief that such a condition is possible; nor can this belief be reached in any controversial spirit. "But let God be true and every man a liar," so I advise that His verdict be obtained upon the question.

It must be that God will give a definite and clear cut answer to this question, when it is asked in good faith. What I may say on the subject, of "How to keep from sinning," will of course be of service only to those who get an answer from God in the affirmative.

Taking my practical definition of sin into consideration, I must believe that, there will be essential agreement with my position, and I have to take that for granted, in order to proceed with the discussion of the most important part of this all important subject.

This whole matter of Divine Guidance is a matter of faith pure and simple, and it is this fundamental principle of the Christian life, projected into all the future, and into all the details of life.

When we first exercised faith in God for the forgiveness of our sins, it was at once

honored, and our sins were forgiven, and at that moment there was no sin upon our souls. God's approval was as clear as the noonday sun. There was no doubt at all, but what He was then well pleased with us, and delighted in our confidence and love. Now all I claim is, that this state may be perpetuated without a break, providing the original condition of faith remains intact. For what God can do for us in one moment or during one hour, He can perpetuate during all the hours of our pilgrimage.

Our first act of faith was, that God would, or did then and there, pardon our sins and adopt us into His family; and the faith to be exercised subsequently through life, differs only from this act, in that, it is a faith for the perpetuation of that which is already a fact, that is, the full assurance that God is with us constantly, and will by His almighty power and grace, keep our souls in innocence, and preserve us in the integrity of our hearts; as before stated, a faith to be kept in the position we were then in.

It is true that, there are but few persons who learn this lesson in the beginning;

and so the average experience of Christians is that of sinning and repenting, the humiliating experience of doing what ought not to be done, and leaving undone what ought to be done. Instead of saying "My soul shall make her boast in God," and constantly having the electric wire of faith, which attaches the poor weak soul to the limitless power of the Holy Ghost, always connected, the connection is very often broken, and the spiritual machinery of the Christian is at a stand-still.

But many a Christian has learned the reason for his failure to do the will of God, and has once and for all, learned the perpetual faith act; so that now he is kept from falling into sin, and never knows what it is to stand condemned, either before God, or at the bar of his own conscience.

When one knows how to do this, it is very easy and simple, but practically it seems to be a hard lesson to learn; for few know the happy secret, and many being conscious of their own earnest endeavors to solve the problem, and having failed, declare that it cannot be done. I do not know why God has conditioned most of His greatest bless-

ings on knowledge, but it is a fact, and to-day God can say as of yore, "My people perish for lack of knowledge."

Our faith to be kept from sin must take in the following conditions among others.

First. That the Holy Spirit dwells in us; and that His exclusive business, so far as we are concerned, is to teach us the will of God, and cause us to do it. We must place no reliance whatever, upon our good resolutions, or good works, or upon ourselves, or our fellows. We must not depend upon any outward helps whatsoever, or upon any so called religious feeling, but know and act as we know; that the Holy Ghost and He alone, can keep us in a condition constantly well pleasing to God.

Second. Our faith must be absolute. There must be no expectation that the Holy Spirit will permit us to do anything that will displease God. Our faith must be a certainty that He will, and does, keep us from sinning. If our faith has one broken link, or allows even one little sin in the life, the entire chain of faith is useless. There must be the conviction of certainty, "That faithful is He that calleth you, who

also will do it;" in response to Paul's prayer, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Third. Then the faith must be fundamental. That is the Holy Spirit must be allowed to make the laws for our life, and He will not build upon our human ideas. He will not build upon any pious, or other conception that we may have, of what a Christian should do. He will not even share this work with us, so that as long as we have any vestige of our own will, or in any measure expect Him to build to our plans, He cannot work His almighty power in us. We must believe that He is able to communicate to us at all times, what we ought to do, and that He does so. To have any fear that, such an abandonment to the Holy Ghost will be a failure or in any way disastrous, is an effectual barrier to our enjoying the blessing here spoken of.

To start on this life as an experiment, is an impossibility; for it must be entered forever, or can be entered never. All who

pass over the river of creed guidance, or self-guidance, or common sense guidance, to the Holy Spirit for His guidance, must pull up all the bridges behind them. Over the portals of one of the infernal regions, in Dante's conception of the lost, are these words, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here"; and with the addition of one word, this language must be applied to all who enter this earthly paradise, "All *other* hope abandon, ye who enter here."

The Holy Spirit must be the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the one only Guide, and Planner of our life, and then, He will keep us always in a condition well pleasing to Him.

Fourth. This faith must not depend upon sight. It is a faith in the Unseen, and the Invisible; a full dependence upon that which is in no way tangible, to the outward senses. It is a confident start upon the invisible bridge, which spans the yawning chasm between the present and the unknown future. It is Abraham starting on a journey he knew not whither, and for possessions he knew not what, only in so far as he put his reliance upon the unseen

God, who had spoken to him in a voice without sound. If there is no God, or if He cannot or will not now make known His will to the faithful soul; or if the story of Noah, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and Joseph; of Moses, of Gideon, of David and Samuel, of John the Baptist and of Jesus, is mythical and not historical, then he is a fool who abandons the seen for the Unseen, and risks his all in a God who exists only in the excited imagination of fanatics. But if the Bible God is a real God; if He who gave speech can speak: and if He who made the ear can Himself hear; if the story of the many men, both in and out of the Bible, be true, that God does indeed dwell with, and talk to men; then he is a wise man who commits himself without sight to such a God.

Fifth. But this faith will be justified by results, in the daily life and experience, of all who dare thus commit themselves to the unseen Holy Spirit.

Each successive step on this journey is a faith step; but when the step is taken, it then becomes knowledge, for the foot strikes solid ground. Each new day is started in

naked faith ; but when to-day becomes yesterday, the faith is justified by the results; and the glorious facts of each day's experience, can be subjected to the most searching scrutiny. Each day will be a day of complete victory over the world, the flesh and the Devil. Such a soul linked to the Almighty, will go forth "From conquering and to conquer," and daily make her boast in God. Instead of the daily wail of doing what ought not to be done, and leaving undone what ought to be done, and being conscious of sinning in thought, word and deed ; there will be the exultant experience of, "Now being dead unto sin, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end is everlasting life;" "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." For while they that are in the flesh cannot please God yet, they who are in the Spirit and in whom the Spirit of God dwells, do constantly please him ; "For as many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God."

And thus, our comfort and dependence, is

not in ourselves, but our daily song of praise to God is, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE EVOLUTION OF SPIRITUAL LAW.

The term law used in the Bible with various meanings.—Mosaic, Moral, Spiritual, Civil.—The law of life and the law of death.—Laws for children and laws for adults.—God's law has been progressive.—Antediluvian, Patriarchal, Mosaic, Prophetic, The Holy Spirit.—One set of laws prepares humanity for a higher law.—God develops a healthy Christian much upon the same plan as He has developed humanity.

THE term law is mentioned in the Bible with various significations, and one needs to understand how it is used in any given passage, or else, it is impossible to get at the meaning of the sacred text. In Romans, the second chapter, and thirteenth verse, Paul says, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." In the tenth chapter, and fourth verse, he states, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." In the one case it would seem to teach, if we did not inves-

tigate further, that we are justified by keeping the law, and in the other case it would seem that Christ was the end, or the completion of the law for believers, so that we had nothing more to do with it. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the sixth chapter, and first verse, Paul says, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before saints?" but in the ninth chapter of the same Epistle in the twentieth and twenty-first verses he uses the term law in another sense, in fact in two other senses. "And unto the Jews I became a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law." Now in the text about brother going to law with brother, he refers to the civil law; while in the last quoted passage, he refers in the body of the text, to the law of ordinances and ceremonies; and in fact to the whole of the Mosaic law; while in the parenthesis he refers to the eternal law of God, embracing morality

and spirituality, also the law to Christ, the keeping of which is the secret of being able to keep God's law, or commandments.

In the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we have an account of certain disciples who told the Gentile converts at Antioch that they could not be saved unless they keep the law of Moses. Paul and Barnabas, who were there at the time, made no small stir with these Judaizing teachers; but the error had such a hold upon the people, that it seems it could not be settled without sending a deputation to the Apostles, at Jerusalem, with Paul and Barnabas, to have the Apostles and Elders settle the question.

When the deputation got there, the Apostles and Elders came together to consider the matter. The case is opened in the fifth verse, by one of the representatives from Antioch in these words, "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, "That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." Upon this statement being made there seems to have been

much disputing over the question, and after Peter, Barnabas, Paul and James had made speeches, the Apostles and Elders with the whole Church seem to have reached a unanimous opinion on the subject.

They decided to send a deputation of their own number to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas and the brethren that came up with them, with a message containing their deliverance. This message starts at the twenty-fourth verse of the fifteenth chapter, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment," etc. The epistle goes on to say that the Holy Spirit laid upon them only some very simple laws which are all contained in one verse, and that they were not under obligation to keep the law of Moses.

Sometimes the New Testament seems to speak of the law as still binding and in force, and at other times as though Christians were not under the law. This apparent discrepancy is accounted for from the fact of the term law, being used in different

senses, and the same sense being looked at from different standpoints.

Paul in the statement "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" uses the word law with two entirely different meanings, or at least refers to two entirely different kinds of law; and yet in one sense the both laws have their origin in one great fundamental law, and both laws seek to accomplish the same object. Let us inquire then about these two laws, the law of death and the law of life.

What is the law of sin and death from which we are to be made free? As I read the Bible I see that God deals with humanity as a wise parent deals with his children.

There are certain laws or restrictions very little children are put under, which parents do not fetter them with, when they get older; but when they are free from these primary laws there are other laws for them to observe and be governed by; and when they get older still, and develop into manhood and womanhood there are still higher laws which are given them.

The laws of infancy, and the laws of

youth, are no longer operative in matured persons. They are then not required to square their lives by these earlier laws. Yet while we graduate from the letter of earlier laws to broader and more liberal rules of conduct, still we find on investigation, that all true rules for right conduct, whether for children or adults, are based on precisely the same underlying principles.

By the old method of teaching English a child would graduate from the alphabet to words, and then to short sentences and then to a combination of sentences making good English. As one stage is passed and another reached, the laws governing the lower stage are abandoned, and the pupil is placed under a higher order of law. Matured persons read without any consciousness of the letters that form the words, and almost without consciousness of the words which make the sentence; and in fact, when absorbed in the theme, and the thought is clear to our minds, we have but little consciousness of either letters, words, or sentences, the mind is so absorbed in the thought that the vehicle which contains it is overlooked. Such an experience, however,

is not possible to one who is still under the law of the schoolmaster and is learning to read. He spells out the words laboriously, and puts the sentences together with great pains-taking, and then perhaps fails to get the full idea contained in what he is reading.

The Bible reveals to us God's dealing with mankind much upon these principles. Under various dispensations God has given different laws, and each new law has been an improvement upon its predecessor ; not that God's first laws were merely experiments, and when He found they were failures He made others ; not that a bad law ever gave place to a good law, but always a good law giving place to a better one. One dispensation accomplishes its purpose, and a nobler one is ushered in ; one set of laws preparing humanity for a higher sphere, and then new laws come in to govern the nobler form of life. Look if you please at the rude and vague antediluvian law, the better patriarchal law, the glorious but still imperfect Mosaic law, the still grander dispensation of the prophets and of John the Baptist, and more glorious yet of Jesus,

until the full-orbed day of the wonderful dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

To a greater extent than many of us conceive, a normal and healthy Christian is developed much after the same pattern ; " First the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear," is God's order.

CHAPTER XXII.

FREEDOM FROM THE PENALTY OF BROKEN LAW.

Three fundamental facts concerning the broken law.—A large number of persons “Without Christ and without hope in the world.”—Under the law of sin and death.—The law of the Spirit frees us from the law of death.—Freedom from condemnation.—Freedom from the law itself.—“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”—Christ abolished every other law but the law of the Spirit.

THERE are three great facts affirmed in the Bible concerning sin and forgiveness ; (1) “We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God,” (2) “Jesus is the propitiation for our sins : and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,” and (3) “God can be just and yet the justifier of him who believes in Jesus.” From these passages we get the three vital facts : that we are all sinners and deserving God’s reprobation, that Jesus stands in the room and stead of the sinner ; that God can

forgive our sins in harmony with the principles of eternal justice, the moment we accept of Christ as our Saviour. But these three facts can never be fully understood until a man gives himself up to God, and then, "The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus makes him free from the law of sin and death" in which he has been held in bondage.

There is a large number of persons who are still "In the bonds of iniquity and the gall of bitterness," "Without Christ and without hope in the world," whose consciousness attests that fact, and yet who would give the world to realize it fully, so that they could have a more powerful incentive to lead a Christian life.

The law of sin and death is so operating upon them that their feelings refuse to be governed by their judgment and while reason and conscience tell them of their danger, and say they ought to be Christians, yet their feelings and will power are so benumbed, or dead, that they can take no step toward Christ and a Christian life. Intellectually they would like to be Christians and they give assent to the truth but

they are held in the grip of an unyielding law.

This is no new experience for it has been the same for years with many of them. One asks as a representative of the rest, "What can be done to bring about a change of feeling and quicken me into life?" I answer, "There is only one thing you can do, my brother, and that, is indicated in the passage quoted; put yourself under "The law of the Spirit of Life" and that will free you from "The law of sin and death" in which you are now held. Just give yourself up to God as you now are, talk to Him as you would to any other person, tell Him of your indifference, of your lack of feeling, tell Him about the hardness of your heart and ask Him for His Holy Spirit to operate upon your nature, to show yourself to yourself, to show you your sins and then to reveal Jesus to you. Jesus said, when He was promising the disciples to send the Holy Spirit and take His place, "When He is come He shall convince the world of sin"; and Paul says, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit will show you your real sinful

self, and then He will introduce you to Jesus as your Saviour, and then He will quicken you into newness of life, and make you a new creature ; then you will become a fellow-citizen with the saints, then He will teach you to live well pleasing to God, and you will have the exultant experience that "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." But this freedom implies more than freedom from condemnation on account of a broken law.

It is also freedom from the law itself. All natural men are under the law, and they make vain attempts to keep it. There are, I think, but few men who do not try more or less to keep God's law. They know "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good." "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin that it might appear sin working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might appear exceeding sinful." Hence they find their inability to keep the law, "And the commandment which was ordained to life is found to be unto death." Now Paul clearly

calls God's good law, "The law of sin and death," and from this law of sin and death we are to be made free.

Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans, likens the law to a woman's husband, to whom she is bound as long as the husband liveth. But when the husband is dead she is free to marry another. And hence Paul reasons, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh (that is our natural state) the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Now this makes Paul's meaning clear in the statement; "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Christ abolished every other law but the law of the Spirit when He established His Kingdom. He says Himself in Luke the

sixteenth chapter and sixteenth verse, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." It follows then, that the Christian is under no other law but that of faith, love and obedience to Jesus Christ, which is the law of the Spirit written upon all regenerate hearts.

Moses and the prophets are no longer our ultimate teachers, nor must their laws necessarily bind our conscience; all we know is loyalty to Jesus, both to His spoken words, and His communications to us by His Holy Spirit, called by Paul "The Spirit of Life." Jesus summed up all the commandments in the word love, love to God and love to man, and he who really loves God and loves his brother, lives a life well pleasing to God. In the Old Testament laws, there is almost endless detail, and God then demanded implicit obedience; but under the reign of the Holy Spirit there is but one thing to do, and that is to abandon ourselves to His leading, taking His will, having faith in His management, and thus we shall be "Free from the law of sin and death."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT.

This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.—In other ages God put his people under other laws.—The masses got guidance at the hands of Judges, Priests and Prophets.—The law of the Spirit is direct individual contact with God.—This new covenant plainly foretold in the Old Testament.—Each person is privileged to have direct access to God.—The teaching of the Spirit is superior to the personal teaching of Jesus.—“For the promise is unto you and to your children.”—The law of the Spirit includes complete guidance in all things.—We need guidance in the small things as much as in the great things.—All Christians desire guidance.

This dispensation is pre-eminently the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. In other ages God had other laws which His people had to observe in order to find out His will and to please Him.

The people for the most part had to find out the mind of God through mediums, and God seems to have communicated through these mediums to the common people. God talked with the leaders of the children of

Israel ; with the Judges, the Priests and the Prophets, and through them to the people, and in this way they got to know God's will ; " But it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams ; and on My servants and on Mine handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit ; and they shall prophesy." Now these days are upon us, and God challenges each one of us " To talk to Him face to face as a man talks with his friend."

The law of the Spirit is direct individual contact with God the Spirit. There are no more priests except it is every man being a priest in his own household, and all followers of Jesus being Kings and Priests unto God. There is no need now for Urim and Thummim, as conductors of the Spirit of God to the mind of the Priest, and through him to the people.

Jesus said, quoting from Isaiah : " It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God." Paul states in He-

brews, "For the law made nothing perfect, and the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we *draw nigh unto God*." "But now He (Jesus) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah : . . . for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people : and they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest." "In that He saith a new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

Here we see that the old dispensation of getting the mind of God through other

human beings, is no longer a necessity. Each person has the privilege of direct access to God, through the Spirit, and of getting the mind of God upon all life's problems. Blessed as was the lot of those who so-journed with Jesus while in the flesh; unspeakable as their privilege was to listen to His matchless words, and dwell amid the glory of His sacred presence, yet their condition was vastly inferior to a man living under the law of the Spirit, and having constant, unbroken, individual contact and communion with God.

Jesus taught this to His disciples, most emphatically. He told them His stay with them was transient, that in fact it was necessary for Him to go away, for said He, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." He was to be with them in the flesh only for a short time, but the Son, through the eternal Spirit, abideth for ever. As Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever."

The Holy Spirit is the constant guest of the faithful soul. Feelings and emotions

are as variable as the wind, as fleeting as a summer cloud, as transient as the morning dew; friends come and friends go; outward circumstances are often an unknown quantity, but the blessed Holy Spirit abides for ever, and is a satisfying portion. Jesus in the person of the Holy Spirit is "The Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

"Earthly friends may fail and leave us,
One day soothe, the next day grieve us,
But this Friend will never leave us,
Oh, how he loves?"

Then again, Jesus could not while in the flesh, teach those who listened to His words, as much or as well as He can teach us by His Spirit. Those who are under the direct control of the Spirit, recognizing Him as the supreme law of life, are taught of God grander lessons, and in a shorter time than Jesus could teach his disciples while He was with them. I am not called upon to explain the philosophy of this, nor do I pretend to understand it; I simply give you the words of Jesus and I personally bow to them in implicit faith. After telling them all, and in fact more than, their minds could fully grasp; He said: "I have yet many things

to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth : for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak ; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you."

Jesus could not teach them, try as He would, the spiritual nature of His Kingdom. He was three years trying to enlighten them, but up to the very last they did not understand Him. Hear the pathetic speech of the two whom Jesus overtook while they were on the road to Emmaus, on the day of His resurrection : " But we trusted (say they) that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel " ; and they talk like bitterly disappointed men as they were. Jesus retorted on them. " O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," as He opened up the Scriptures to them.

There was something so mysterious about the work and mission of Jesus that no man, it seems, could understand it by a natural process. The Scriptures about the Christ,

looked to be so paradoxical, that the natural man could not understand them. But God taught the disciples more in one hour, when the Spirit was given to them in Pentecostal fulness, than they had learned during the three years of the ministry of Jesus. And so it is to-day; there are truths so subtle that they cannot be grasped with words, they are literally "Unspeakable and full of glory"; human language cannot convey them from the soul that knows them, to the soul that knows them not. A man must come in contact with God direct, and commune with Him; must learn the voice of the Spirit, in order to learn ultimate spiritual truth. Spiritual blindness and ignorance, are laws of sin and death, that we can only be freed from by "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

The law of the Spirit implies being indwelt of the Spirit. Paul puts this clearly: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

The Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart of the believer is the explanation of a great

many of the Bible figures of speech that cannot otherwise be explained.

Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria, that, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," and the sacred writer adds, "But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

These two wonderful promises of Jesus clearly indicate a perpetual, conscious experience of joy and satisfaction for the believer.

The source of the joy being within himself; but not of himself, and yet proceeding out of himself. A state of constant satisfaction and rest of soul. From these promises of the Master it seems to be the privilege of

the Christian, not to be dependent upon anything outside of himself for happiness. He is independent of circumstances and fears neither adversity nor prosperity, courting neither the frowns nor the smiles of his associates ; a truly blessed man morning, noon and night, each day of the year. If you will think calmly, you will see that my interpretation of these words of the Saviour are underdrawn rather than overdrawn. Now do not, I pray you, bring down the standard to your own experience, but take the plain and sober meaning of Christ's words.

And now I will state that no man's experience can come up to this standard, who is not consciously indwelt of the Holy Spirit. In saying this, I do not unchristianize those whose experience do not come up to this wonderful provision. Far be this from me ; I simply call attention to the great salvation which has been provided for all of us ; "For the promise is unto you and unto your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call."

No blessing, or grace, or emotion, no zeal, no watching, no fasting or prayer, no faith-

fulness, however scrupulous, can bring such heartfelt satisfaction and perennial peace; this is an experience that can only be received by accepting the Holy Spirit; and can only be RETAINED by recognizing Him as literally dwelling in our hearts. We receive Him by faith, and faith is just believing the words of Jesus and acting them out; but the faith is turned into actual realization when the blessed Comforter Divine comes in to make His abode in our heart.

Do not let the thought bother you, in the way it has me; as to how the great God the Spirit can actually dwell in your body. Solomon however seems to have been solving the same problem in that wonderful prayer at the dedication of the Temple. He says, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; much less this house that I have builded." And yet we know, that God did dwell in that Temple even though He filled immensity at the same time. That is He revealed himself there, and manifested His power and glory, so that all the people felt the glory of the

Lord in the house of the Lord. The Holy Spirit is God and is everywhere present; He dwells in the heavens, He stands upon the earth. He broods over the face of the great deep. His presence permeates all space, and impregnates all there is of matter and of mind; there is no getting away from God; "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being." "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me."

So that *actually* the Lord the Spirit is as much in a sinner's heart as He is anywhere, but the sinner does not want Him there, and will not have Him there so far as his consciousness is concerned. And it goes without saying that the Holy Ghost is in every Christian's heart; but He does not manifest Himself and display His glory,

only where He is clearly recognized and honored. *Practically* the Holy Spirit as Comforter, as Teacher, as Guide, dwells only in the heart of those who consciously entertain Him. Hence one of the laws of the Spirit is that, the Christian must believe himself indwelt of God, in order to get the full benefit of "The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus."

Receiving the Holy Spirit by faith, to come into one's heart and make His abode there, is just as much a practical fact, as though the blessed Spirit were actually away from us, and came to us in answer to our prayers. Hence for the Christian to recognize the Holy Spirit as his indweller, is equivalent to being baptized with the Holy Spirit in a Pentecostal sense.

The law of the Spirit includes complete guidance in all things. Under other dispensations, some things were secular and some were sacred, but under this dispensation, to the Christian man there is nothing secular. We are exhorted to do our eating and drinking to the glory of God, and to glorify Him in our bodies and spirits which are His. To the man of God everything is worship.

Swinging the sledge, driving the saw, holding the plow, selling goods over the counter, buying and selling, are all acts of worship, and all go up to God as a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor.

Life is such a sacred thing, that no man has wisdom enough to perform its holy functions without God's guidance. Life is a pathway that we travel over only once, hence *we need guidance*. We know not a single step of the way. The past is gone and cannot be recalled, the future is known to God alone; all we can control and that only partially, is the single step we are now taking. We cannot see a foot ahead of us; it is all a blank, and impenetrable. We do not know what a day or an hour may bring forth. We do not know what effect the decision of to-day will have upon the future of our lives, and we are wholly dependent upon God.

It is true that we can in some measure judge the future by the past; but the past is no certain criterion of what the future will be. New circumstances, new problems, new emergencies are constantly arising; events that never happened before to us or

any one else, and may never happen again, are frequently transpiring. Now if God requires of us at all times, to do the right thing, and He clearly does; then we certainly need His guiding eye in all the events of life.

There are times in our history when we have to make decisions that will affect the entire future of our lives. We use the reason God has given us, we look into all the circumstances, we make full and complete inquiry, and sometimes we know as little about what is best to be done, at the close of our investigation, as when we began. But the time has come to decide; the supreme moment has arrived; YES, or NO, must be said; we must take the road to the right or the road to the left; necessity is upon us and the decision must come.

Now the question is, "Can a man so decide, that he may know when the decision is made that it has been made right? Dare he walk in confidence over the new road, feeling he is on the right track, and with head erect and heart and nerve steady, pursue the way with all the assurance of a man who is certain of the steps he is taking? Or must

he constantly feel that perhaps he has made a mistake? ”

If a Christian man under such circumstances, may not know with certainty that he is right, then life is certainly a lottery, to the best of us, and God has left us as orphans and wanderers to grope our way in the dark as best we may, and we are indeed under “ A law of sin and death.” But if a man may know he is right ; and realize that he is Divinely called to the sphere he is now in, then doubtless God supplies our needs, and His fatherly care is equal to all the emergencies of life.

Yes, says one, I believe that God directs in the great things of life and in all spiritual matters, but He has given us our common sense to guide us in all the little and trivial things.

If you will reason a little deeper, my brother, you will see that we need Divine Guidance just as much in the so-called little things, as we do in what we regard more important matters. If guidance is needed at all, it is needed always, and all around the circle of life. I have only to mention it, to make it clear to our minds that the most

momentous events often result from very small and insignificant causes. It was the fall of an apple through which gravitation was discovered, and the lid of a kettle lifting first suggested the mighty power of steam.

It was only a little pebble on the track that wrecked the express train, and hurled scores to death; it was only a slight cold, which resulted in consumption, and the wife was left a widow and the children fatherless.

It seemed purely an accidental meeting which introduced you to the woman who became your wife. It was a most annoying thing that the train steamed out of the station, just as you got there and you were left behind; but you were horror-stricken an hour afterwards when you learned that the train you were going on had been wrecked and nearly all on board killed. But why give more illustrations of the truth I am teaching, when it must be so plain to everybody? The terms great and small, as applied to human actions are not absolute, they are only relative; for what we call small God often calls great; and what we

call great is often of small moment to Him who sees the end from the beginning.

Certainly we need Divine guidance in all things, and all our hearts breathe the prayer,

“ Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah !
Pilgrim through this barren land ;
I am weak, but Thou are mighty ;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.”

We all desire Divine guidance. The burden of our prayers in the morning is to be guided during the day, and at night we pray in reality, if not in fact ;

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.”

In all things the Christian feels his ignorance and weakness, and constantly prays to God for guidance.

Are all these prayers vain ? Are our devout aspirations after God as the Guide of our pilgrim feet, only inspired in us to mock us ? Has God made provision to take us to Heaven and left us to grope our way thither in the dark as best we may ? Nay verily : the guidance that we need, and that our hearts long after, is ours to enjoy ; and we may be just as sure we are right in the

daily affairs of life, as we are that "God is God and that right is right."

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice," and He causeth "ALL THINGS to work together for good to them that love Him."

One of the chief offices of the Holy Spirit is, that of Guide for His people. Jesus said, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth." And John states, "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."

On the one hand Jesus promises the Holy Spirit as the Teacher and Guide of His people, and on the other hand John many years after the Spirit had been given, emphatically declares that the Holy Spirit taught them all things, and taught them the truth and no lie, and that this Divine Teacher should abide in them.

It seems unnecessary to follow out the scriptural proof at any greater length, but

this doctrine of the Spirit's guidance is as clearly taught in the Bible as the doctrine of justification by faith. Certainly it is the birthright of all believers, and it is just what a man needs to make him well-pleasing to God, and his life satisfactory to himself.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DIVINE ARTIST.

Many metaphors used for the Holy Spirit.—By looking at God we are transformed into His image.—What is God's glory?—His power, wisdom, happiness, love, and His Holiness.—The medium through which we see God's glory.—Nature and revelation.—Nature fails to reveal all we need to know.—Jesus is the perfect medium through which we see God.—The Holy Spirit essential to perfectly see God through any medium.—An honest mind essential to see God.—We may investigate with boldness.—There must be absolute free thought if we would have a clear vision of God.—“All things are yours.”—A fuller knowledge of God means a fuller knowledge of our possessions.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

The metaphors of the Bible, especially of the New Testament, which are used to illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of the Christian, are as varied as they are numerous. It is represented by the figures of eating and drinking, of tast-

ing and seeing, by walking and running, by washing and cleansing, by light and darkness, by blood and fire, by bread and water, by wine and milk and honey, and numberless other things. And herein many persons blunder and bring to themselves mental confusion and spiritual hurt. It is always well to remember that a figure is nothing more or less than a figure, and it is used simply to illustrate or represent to our minds something real; we must not allow ourselves to make an idol of a figure, as I fear is sometimes done.

You will find that all figures of speech that are used in the Bible, which have reference to the purifying of our natures, and the satisfying of our longings, have exclusive reference to the Holy Spirit. In the Divine plan it seems that the Holy Spirit is the Person who performs in us all the work of salvation from its Alpha to its Omega. Hence when Jesus promises water of the which if a man drinks he shall thirst no more, He means the Holy Ghost; and when we read "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin"; it means the Holy Ghost coming in contact with the

human soul, as a result of the shedding of Jesus' blood, and thus cleansing it from its sin.

It will be seen upon investigation that, the only language which is not figurative in this connection, is when the Holy Spirit is plainly mentioned. It is difficult to get a passage of Scripture which describes the the work of God in the heart that is not figurative, and the quotation from Paul at the head of this chapter, is no exception to the rule; still while highly figurative it refers to a matter of fact experience which is familiar to all who are spiritual.

The meaning of the writer seems to be that if we behold God's glory, and steadfastly and reverently look at His attributes, admiring the beauty of His character and the grandeur of His holiness, by some divine process, by a spiritual photography as it were, we are transformed into the image of God.

In order to see the image into which we are to be transformed, it will be necessary for us to make the inquiry, *What is God's glory?* I take it that God's glory consists in those infinite and gracious qualities which

inhere in the Divine character. Among these are His power, His wisdom, His happiness, His love, and His holiness. His power as manifested in creation; in bringing into existence all we see of the material Universe, in producing the entire Universe from nothing and in sustaining everything so wonderfully which He has thus created. His wisdom as manifested in the adaptation of the means to the end, in the adaptation and harmony of one thing to every other thing. In the power which He has placed in the Universe to perpetuate itself. The whole creation is a unit; so to speak one vast machine, and everything works in harmony and in unison, and produces the results for which it has been designed. We cannot examine anything in the Universe from an atom of matter up to the human mind, or from this world up to the vast network of worlds with which we are surrounded, without seeing the evidence of a designing mind and infinite wisdom. In this God's glory consists.

Then God is infinitely happy. We cannot conceive of a perfect being, without attributing to him the quality of happiness.

Nothing that happens in this world or any other world, can disturb the essential happiness of God. The Bible represents God as being displeased and angry at sin, but this language is used to represent to us, that sin is out of harmony with God and His Universe, and is a violation of law, which must necessarily produce discord, and bring unhappiness to the person committing sin, as well as to his fellows.

God can never have a feeling, or any emotion, which can in any measure disturb His essential happiness. God is the great fountain of happiness which can never run dry. In this too consists God's glory.

But more particularly, it may be, that God's glory is in His love ; in that quality of the mind and heart of God which goes out in tender longing, and sympathy, to all the sons and daughters of the human family. In that feeling of unselfish benevolence, which prompts Him to do everything for his creatures which the infinite mind can conceive of. The love of God according to the Scriptures is without top or bottom, and without measure or end. It is like space, illimitable. One cannot conceive

of space with an end, and it is equally impossible to conceive of a limit to the love of God, for "It passeth knowledge." The love of God is one of the most glorious traits in the character of God.

God's glory also consists in His holiness. In His righteous character, in the quality of His laws, in the justice of His administration, in the fairness and equality of all His works whether seen in nature or revealed to us in the Bible. God is just and equal, and His holiness is admired by all intelligent creatures. Thus I have briefly given an outline of some of the attributes of God, which may be called the glory of God.

It seems, according to this teaching of Paul, that if we steadfastly look at God with a worshipful and admiring mind, beholding in Him these beautiful qualities, that we shall be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory by "The Spirit of the Lord."

Then the medium through which we see God's glory is also suggestive. Paul puts it, as "Beholding as in a glass." There are many kinds of glasses with which we behold material objects. There are micro-

scopes and telescopes, magnifying and minifying glasses; using the same figure we can possibly bring them all to our aid in looking at the glory of God.

Nature may be said to be a glass through which we can see God's glory. The Bible is very pronounced in its praise of nature; and the sacred writers borrow many of their songs of love and praise from nature. David says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork," and Isaiah states, "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the Earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." There are many other portions of Scripture which ascribe glory to God, from looking at Him through the wonderful glass of nature. What these Bible writers state is the experience of all thoughtful persons, for we see ¹⁴ God in the storm, we hear Him in the wind, His wonderful power is seen in the rolling waves of the sea. All the seasons of the year speak the praise of God and declare His glory. When the spring sun warms the earth, and kisses the gentle rose,

causing it to burst its beautiful petals and to send out its refreshing fragrance; we witness the power and the glory of God. When the trees throw off the garb of winter and send out their buds and leaves; putting on their holiday attire, and when the birds on the tree tops sing their glad welcome to returning spring, and when nature is covered with God's green velvet carpet; we have a picture, a glass through which we plainly see the glory of God. All the trees of the field clap their hands for joy, and the mountains and the valleys break forth into singing, when they witness the glory of God in the glass of nature.

But although nature is of God, and tells a wondrous story, still she apparently is not sufficient to reveal to us, all that it is necessary to know concerning the character of God and of human destiny.

Nature is grand, and preaches a glorious doctrine upon all questions which she interprets, but there are many vital matters which cannot be clearly discerned in the glass of nature. *It is therefore necessary to look into another glass, namely, revelation, to see more fully the attributes of God, at*

which we are to steadfastly look, in order to be transformed into His image. In the Bible we have revealed to us who, and what God is. In the Old Testament with its wonderful moral law, we see God's justice and holiness, as well as His mercy and love. To read the laws given by God under the Old Testament dispensation, is to worship and admire the Author of these laws. The moral code of the Bible in its fundamentals, is unimprovable after the lapse of centuries. These laws have entered into and have become part of the laws of all civilized nations. The Bible Code is the foundation upon which the mightiest nations of the world have founded their civil codes ; hence the Bible is a clear glass through which we behold the glory of God.

But it is to the New Testament, we must go for a fuller, and clearer knowledge, of those qualities which bring the greater glory to God. Here it is we learn that " Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." In the New Testament we get the full-orbed image of God ; here He is revealed to us in all the loveliness of His character. We not only see

Him as the All-powerful, the All-wise, the All-just God ; but as a God of mercy, pitiful and kind, condescending to have mercy upon those who have gone out of the way, and while retaining His justice, He reveals to us a way by which He can justify those who believe in Jesus.

According to Paul, Jesus of Nazareth is a perfect representation of God. In the second of Corinthians, the fourth chapter and the fourth verse, we read, " In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, *who is the image of God*, should shine unto them." And in the sixth verse Paul states, " For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Thus we see, Paul holds up Jesus to us, as the only perfect medium through which we can see God. In looking at Jesus, and thus beholding the glorious character of our God, we are transformed into the same image, " From glory to glory."

Our gaze at God, through any of these

mediums, it seems, will be imperfect, unless the glass is made transparent, and our minds are made clear by the Holy Spirit. "No man can call Jesus the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." When Peter, in answer to a question from Jesus, said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus answered him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Jesus at one time, after a long conversation with His disciples, said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Thus the Holy Ghost is the chief medium through which we see the glorious character of God, and seeing we are transformed into the image of God.

It may be helpful to us to consider the way that we should look into God's glass.

Paul in our study, states it thus, "With open face." Now this may mean, that a man must look fairly, honestly, steadfastly, and straight into the glass that is held before him. Not with a half look, or a side glance, but with an "Open face."

A man who would see God as He is, must come to the investigation with an honest mind. I have doubt as to whether there ever was an honest infidel; or for that matter, whether there ever was an honest unbeliever in any of the fundamental truths of the Bible. Jesus said, "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." When the disciples came to Jesus to have explained to them one of His parables which He had just delivered to the multitude, He said, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables, that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand;" Christ's disciples were men who wanted to know the truth, but they were much confused at what they had just heard, and as honest-minded men they inquired of Him as to His mean-

ing. The multitude waited upon the Ministry of Jesus with various motives; some of them came to set a trap for Him, to catch Him in His words; to seek an occasion against Him by which they could accuse Him before the law. Others came from motives of curiosity; while still others came for the loaves and fishes which Jesus had distributed. Most of the multitude were not honest in their search for truth, and Jesus expressly stated that the truth was taught to such in parables, on purpose to test their honesty.

The same truth which is a stumbling-block to the dishonest man, is revealed to the honest-hearted, and becomes luminous with light and full of comfort. Unto you honest men, it is given to know the mystery of God, but unto you dishonest men, the truth itself is a snare. Truth to one man is a "Savor of life unto life," and to another man "The savor of death unto death." To one man truth is the means of his salvation, while the same truth to a less honest man is the means of his condemnation. An honest man will surely find God; God will reveal Himself to him, He will open His

Heart of love and tenderness, and show the truth-lover that He is his Father and his Friend, and as the honest man looks at the revelation of God of Himself, he is transformed into the very image of God.

Just as naturally as the needle of the compass turns to the Pole, so will an honest man turn to God. No matter how strong the gale, or how high the waves may roll; no matter how the ship may be tossed, the compass will be true, and by some subtle influence, or law, will point to the North. Thus it is with an honest man, amid all the doctrines and isms, amid all the conflicting theories, and the admitted mysteries, just as surely as God exists an honest man will not miss his way, and God will be revealed to him in His true character. Then rest easy, honest soul, you will surely find the light.

This expression "Open face" also denotes that we should come to the investigation boldly. We need be afraid of nothing. Some seem to think that it is wicked for a man to examine the foundations of things, or to investigate the character of God. But the Bible gives no ground for such fear. We are commanded to "Prove all things and

hold fast that which is good." We should be afraid of nothing; indeed it is our business to investigate. God Himself is a subject of profound investigation.

There should be absolute free thought, we should give our minds full swing, and never be afraid to dig down to the bottom of things. Error fears the light of investigation, but truth courts it. If you hold the truth, nothing but good can come of your examining as to its foundations. Then give your thoughts full liberty, for every new discovery in the spiritual world is a new blessing to enjoy; each new truth you discover, is a new world to become possessed of; each new feature in God's face, reveals more of His lovely character, and shows some quality of heart or mind which you are to become possessed of, for it is your privilege to be transformed into His image "From glory to glory."

Then boldly lay your telescope through God's vast space; search all you can find, and bring down the worlds of spiritual truth and appropriate them to your own soul's good. Look steadfastly into the face of Jesus, study His example, His teach-

ings; master His wonderful precepts, dig deep into the mine of spiritual truth which He has revealed to us. Unearth its treasures; bring up the gold and diamonds, and precious stones which are only discovered by hard fearless work, and have these riches put to your credit in God's bank.

Appropriate all the spiritual wealth that God has, for "All things are yours." Depend upon it, you can find nothing in the universe of God, that will not be a blessing, and which you will not be glad to know. When new duties are discovered, these are never "Grievous but joyous, and in keeping of them there is great reward." Everything that God made, has been made in the interest of His people, so that, a fuller knowledge of the mind of God, only means a fuller knowledge of the riches that He has provided for His children.

Then, this open-faced gaze must be constant and steadfast. Looking into the glass of God does not weary one. The mind is not necessarily on a strain, but the obedient man looks with all the pleasure, and with all the ease with which he greets the light of day. Hence, with the look of faith and

reverent love, one should ever keep his eyes upon God his Father, and having his mind illuminated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he constantly sees wondrous things in the law of the Lord, and brings out of God's treasure house things new and old.

CHAPTER XXV.

GOD'S IMAGE IS THE CHRISTIAN'S IDEAL.

A man becomes like his ideal.—Men unconsciously imitate what they admire.—Business, education, association, reading.—God's ideal for us, is His image.—The work of Jesus is to reproduce the image of God upon the soul.—We are to receive power.—Jesus is made unto us wisdom.—We are to have "The peace of God which passeth all understanding."—The love of God is to be shed abroad in our hearts.—We are to be holy as God is holy.—These are the Divine qualities we are to possess.—Our transformation is "From glory to glory."—Conversion is God's least blessing.—God develops our soul as a painter does a portrait.—God is constantly making new pictures upon the soul.—Death does not stop the soul's progress.

WE can now consider the results of beholding God's glory. *Paul says that we are "Transformed into the same image."* It is a matter of common observation that a man becomes like his ideal. One has said with much truth, "Show me the shrine to which a man bows and I will tell you his character." It is a well-known fact that idolaters become like their god. If they invest their god with cruel and ferocious qualities;

then the worshippers are cruel and ferocious ; if their god loves human blood, and if his wrath is appeased by human sacrifice, then the worshippers hold human life very cheap, and with all good conscience kill each other to please their god. Mothers throw their babes into the Ganges to be swallowed by the alligators, as a sacrifice to their god, thus the very motherly instinct is effaced by bowing down to a false idea of God. We find this tendency in mankind everywhere. Men unconsciously imitate what they admire, and are transformed into the image they worship. Our characters are moulded by our associations, and what we look at admiringly, we become like, in spite of ourselves.

If a man's chief object in life is to do business, then his character rises no higher than the business he performs. If a man loves money, and lives to make it, he becomes hard and selfish ; the milk of human-kindness gets soured, and he becomes a man with but little mercy or sympathy. The hardening process goes on from stage to stage, in proportion as his god of gold increases. He will take advantage of other people's

necessity, he will swim by sinking his fellows. The widow and the orphan arouse no tender sympathy in his heart, but by his hard dealings he will drive the one into the grave, and turn the other into the street.

Even if education is looked upon as an end, a man is unlike God. There are many educated men whose spiritual natures are all dried up, because they have been practically worshipping education. They are mathematical and exact, they are bookish and pedantic; the sap of religious devotion seems to have been drawn from them. They live in a hard and dry realm. Their emotional and spiritual natures have been dwarfed because they have been worshipping the works and laws of God, and have neglected God Himself.

One reason why the spiritual life of many Christians is so fickle, and their morals so far below the New Testament standard, is because of the imperfect ideals they set before their minds. "Evil communications corrupt good manners," the Scriptures declare, and this is particularly true, when applied to the influence of the books we read, upon our minds and characters. There seems to be in this and other countries,

almost a mania for novel reading. I am informed that the vast majority of books taken from the Public Libraries are those in the class of fiction, and the least meritorious works of fiction at that.

It is remarkable the fascination which novel reading has upon the mind. The least evil is the time wasted ; and this is by no means a matter of small moment. Household work, study, the pursuit of ennobling avocations, are neglected for the purpose of greedily devouring these books. Many there are who burn the midnight oil in this pernicious occupation.

Many other deplorable results come to those who are addicted to this habit ; but by far the greatest evil inflicted, and especially upon the young, is the fact that their characters are moulded by the heroes and heroines of the stories. It is a fact that the great majority of modern novels abound in silly love stories ; and although nothing positively impure may be formulated in so many words, yet they often more than hint at subjects which no pure-minded young man or young woman ought to read. Exciting matters are brought into the stories

which cultivate morbid desires, and minister to prurient appetites.

A person reading a book of this kind with admiration, being absorbed in the thrilling narrative, gets his mind moulded by the characters he thus worships. He is transformed into the fictitious images to which he bows down.

Thus the children of the imagination of the novelist are made to do the devil's work in corrupting the minds of many young men and women. It is said, that the eye contains a perfect picture in miniature of the object it last looks upon ; and it is certainly true that the mind is impressed by what it beholds, and in the case of the person given to reading pernicious literature, the impression made for evil cannot be over-estimated.

No matter what amount of education or Christian training such a reader has received, he cannot read these books without their leaving an impress upon his character. Just as the food we eat, by digestion becomes a part of our bodies, so the mental food which we consume is assimilated by our moral natures.

It is not then a small thing for us to con-

sider, and no person can afford to spend even his spare time in reading such literature. It is well known that the novels which are most eagerly devoured are those which are the most sensational and contain the veriest trash. The novels of the higher order can generally be found in their places at the Public Libraries, but the literary swill with which Christian lands is being flooded is generally kept well in circulation. If this thing goes on, and grows as it has been growing, then the next generation will be far inferior, in moral character and Christian manhood, to the present generation.

I thus sound the alarm for parents and guardians of children, and for the people generally; for if we would have our youths models of Christian character, and develop into true manhood and womanhood, we must set before them in real life, and in their reading, proper models from which to copy.

We learn from the Scripture quoted at the beginning of the previous chapter, that God's ideal for us is His image. Man was created in the image of God so the record states, but by sin it became defaced. The work and mission of Jesus Christ is to reproduce

this image in the human soul, and the Holy Spirit is to be the artist to transform us into this image of God. God the Son became incarnate and dwelt among us, so that we could behold His glory and see the perfect image of God; and God the Holy Spirit engraves this image upon our hearts and consciences while we are in the very act of looking upon the Lord. God proposes through these instrumentalities to make us miniatures of Himself. I have stated that among the chief attributes of God in which His glory consists are His power, His wisdom, His happiness, His love, and His holiness. Now we are to be possessed of each of these Godly qualities.

Jesus said to His disciples in the very last words He uttered before His ascension, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." This was a promise of Jesus which in substance had often been repeated before. It appears to me that God proposes to give us as perfect power in our sphere, as He possesses in His sphere. He proposes to give us all the power we need, so that we can bear every burden placed upon us, perform every duty which

is required of us, and do all the perfect will of God. A Christian filled with the Holy Spirit is equal to all the emergencies of human life. He is not crushed down with a burden that he cannot carry, but he walks with head erect; he is not pulling at a load which he cannot move, for Divine power more than supplies his need. He leaves undone no duty, which he ought to do, for the lack of either spiritual, intellectual, or physical power; for God gives him the exact degree and kind of power that he stands in need of, so that he can perfectly perform every task which God sets him. Hence, it is for the faithful Christian to look at God's power, and through the Holy Spirit be transformed into His image.

What I have said of power is equally true of wisdom. It is God's design that the Holy Spirit shall be our wisdom as well as our sanctification and redemption. We are to be "As wise as serpents" as well as being "As harmless as doves"; God's ideal is to say of us, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye *know all things*." John declares of the Christian, "Ye need not that any man teach you," and Jesus said, refer-

ring to the Holy Spirit, "When He is come He shall teach you all things."

We are living under the dispensation, when the words of Jeremiah may be fulfilled in the personal experience of each individual: "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, it is our privilege to be able to act wisely and well our part in life, and to solve all the problems which confront us, that need solution, in order to our doing the perfect will of God.

Then God's plan is to give us perfect happiness, in the sense of blessedness at least. It is our privilege, to have "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding," in our hearts continually. Constant satisfaction and inward delight is God's ideal concerning us. We are to eat of the bread, of which if a man eat he shall never hunger, and drink of the water of which if a man drink he shall never thirst. We are to have in us, "A well of water springing up into everlasting life." As God is perfectly happy so are we to be perfectly happy, complacent in the

assurance that God is Almighty, and He is our Father, and therefore all is well.

We are also to have "The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us," and this too, in the sense, of being made, "Perfect in love." As we look at the wonderful love of God in the face of Jesus Christ, our natures are flooded with its Divine rays. Even more than this, we are to have the very source of love within us, and are to let its rays beam out upon our fellows.

What has been said concerning our receiving the power, wisdom, happiness and the love of God, is also true of His holiness. The command to us is, "Be ye also Holy, for I am Holy." God intends to drive away the last ray of darkness from our natures, and fill us constantly with the light of holiness. God's ideal for the Christian is His holiness. We are to love the right and nothing but the right; we are to do justly and walk uprightly; our natures must constantly gravitate towards things which are true and right. We are to hate sin with a perfect hatred, and cleave to God with full purpose of heart. All our proneness to sin of any

kind is to be taken away, and we are to become prone to holiness. Our sinful natures by looking to Jesus, are to be entirely reversed, so that it will be true to say of us, "For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

But I now desire to point out that, this transforming process is "From glory to glory." In an important sense it is utterly impossible to over-estimate what God does for us when we are converted; but it is a very disastrous blunder, which a great many people make, to suppose that when a man is converted, he has received all the special, or sudden blessings, which he may receive from the Spirit of God. Certain it is that, conversion is the *least* blessing, which the faithful child of God will receive at the hands of his Father. It may not be amiss to say, that the Holy Spirit develops a man into the image of God, from glory to glory, much as a painter produces a portrait. With a few strokes of his brush or pencil, he can produce an outline picture of his subject. This picture in its ruder form, is easily recognized, and can be said to be like the original. But we know that the artist

will need to spend weeks, and perhaps months, to develop that picture to the utmost possible resemblance of its subject. This, in a good degree, is the way God reproduces His likeness, upon the human heart and conscience ; it is "From glory to glory." The very first touch a sinner gets from God, produces God's image in him, but this likeness is by no means complete ; the developing process goes on until a perfect picture is produced. When the Holy Spirit begets in a man repentance, or hatred for sin, to that extent he is like God. When he is pardoned, or becomes innocent, another of the beautiful features in God's image is produced in him ; and so the divine process goes on, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory.

There is said to be a peculiar looking glass in a heathen temple. When the worshipper goes in, he looks into this glass and first sees his own image ; as he continues to look, he sees one of the inferior gods, then a god higher in rank, and so on, until he sees the image of his chief god. There is in this, an illustration of God's process and plan of salvation.

“ For the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” It is undoubtedly true that God’s moral image can be seen in a Christian, early in the process of God’s work of grace, but the *Holy Spirit develops, or transforms him into the perfect image of God, as fast as his spiritual vision can take in God.* The Holy Spirit, was not given on the day of Pentecost, to make those who received Him moral, for they were that already. He was not given to forgive their sins, as they were now the followers of Jesus. Some of them, had received the parting benediction of the Lord, as they saw Him arise from earth, and caught up into heaven. The Holy Spirit, was not given, to reconcile the historic one hundred and twenty men and women to God, as they continued in prayer waiting for the promise of the Father. But the Pentecostal baptism *was* given, to make them intensely spiritual ; to give them a power they never before possessed, to give them “ All the mind which was in Christ Jesus ” ; to give them Himself as their Guide into all truth, and to illuminate their minds to see the resplendent glory of the Lord,

that they might be changed into the same image "From glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Even when one has the lowest possible Christian experience, it is a glorious thing to be a Christian. To have one's sins forgiven, to be adopted into the family of the King, to be an heir of Heaven, to love God and the good, are experiences very full of glory. But blessed be "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," these great gifts of His hand, are the smallest blessings He has to bestow upon His children. The lowest circle in the Christian life is glorious, but each succeeding circle, excels in glory, so that the raptured participant lives a life of glorious surprises. "For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth."

The expression, "From glory to glory," seems to indicate definite experiences. Undoubtedly, the faithful Christian grows in grace, without being conscious all the time of so doing, just as a boy grows in stature, without feeling it. But the meaning of the quotation is more than mere growth. God makes

new and distinct pictures upon the soul, by the Holy Spirit's instantaneous process, as we behold His glory. A Christian filled with the Holy Spirit resembles a photographer's apparatus, with the camera adjusted to receive any number of pictures. The mind is constantly focussed toward God, and beholds His glory and is transformed into the same image.

To live this glory life one must believe God implicitly and appropriate to his own use all the promises of God as fast as he discovers them. Nor does death stop the soul's progress towards God, but simply marks a distinct epoch in its career. Then in a fairer clime and upon more congenial soil, the development of the Christian goes on from glory to glory. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOW TO KEEP CONVERTED.

The world to be converted through human instrumentality.

—"Go ye into all the world and preach."—"After that the Holy Ghost is come upon you . . . ye shall be witnesses unto me."—The emblem accompanying the gift of the Holy Spirit was a tongue.—No man is converted but through the medium of some other man.—Upon the way men receive God's message depends their salvation.—Belief in Christ is moral and spiritual.—Faith must be continuous in order to continuous salvation.—"If ye continue in My words then are ye disciples indeed."—But few who maintain an unbroken walk with God from the time of conversion.—Jesus solves the problem of keeping converted.

"As He spake those words, many believed on Him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

God intends that the world shall be converted through human instrumentality, and that largely through the spoken word. It was Christ's faithful preaching and plain

statements, which produced a change of opinion, and it is presumed a change of life, in the persons addressed, referred to in the statement, "And as He spake these words many believed on Him."

God has so arranged that the world is to be converted through preaching. One of Christ's last instructions, contained in His parting benediction, was, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"; and after receiving the Holy Spirit, who was to be their travelling companion, they proceeded to carry out their marching orders. The great spiritual revolution of the day of Pentecost, was brought about through the instrumentality of the spoken word of Peter.

Jesus, at the time of His appointment of the Seventy, said unto them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth more laborers into His harvest," and the sickle of each harvester so sent is his tongue, speaking words which are given him by God. The greatest honor conferred upon Christ's disciples is, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy

Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be *witnesses* unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The emblem accompanying the gift of the Holy Spirit was a tongue, and a cloven tongue; perhaps indicating that it was to be used in many languages, and the tongue was duplicated and sat upon each of them.

Paul stated that, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." I do not know of any account in the Bible, of any person having been converted, without the instrumentality of spoken words by a human being. Saul of Tarsus, it may be answered, was so converted; it will be remembered that even in his case, it was the Divine-human Jesus who spake to him, and as He spake the words Saul believed on Him. God did appear to Cornelius and talked to him, but it was to refer him to Peter; and said the Lord, "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do," and we read, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."

I do not know of a case in the Scriptures,

of a conversion either through reading, or apart from the human voice. Since the days of the Apostles, doubtless there have been many converted through reading, yet the vast majority have believed through the spoken words of Christ's ambassadors, as those referred to believed through Christ's own words.

So far as my experience and knowledge extend, *no man is converted but through the medium of some other man.* For while God could do the work direct, and bring about spiritual life without human instrumentality, just as He could propagate the race without such instrumentality, yet as a matter of fact, God has chosen not to do so.

From these words of Jesus we also learn, that upon the *way men receive God's message depends their salvation.* If a man believes the words of Jesus, he is saved, and immediately receives spiritual life; if he will not believe the words of Jesus, the wrath of God abides on him; "But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." The men referred to were not merely convinced of the truth of

Christ's teaching, but their wills were so influenced that they verily resolved to become His disciples.

Belief in Christ is moral and spiritual, and not merely intellectual. Christ so adjusted, and so continues to adjust His words to those that hear them, that a man with honest purposes always sees the truth ; and will instinctively believe on Him ; while the man who will not forsake his sins ; and is therefore dishonest, becomes confused, by the very words which are so luminous and plain to the other. Jesus said, " If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." As He said to His disciples on another occasion, " Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God ; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables ; that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand."

While belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, saves a man's soul, the very moment he believes, yet *an isolated, or a momentary act of faith, will not save forever.* Faith must be a perpetual act in order to perpetual

salvation. The warning to these young converts is, "If ye CONTINUE in My word then are ye My disciples indeed." I will not here enter into the disputed question, whether a man truly converted can finally apostatize; but I certainly maintain, and all must agree that, a Christian may backslide, and it is also clear that very many young converts do go back again into the world, and turn their backs upon Jesus Christ. Men are "Chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"; and as Peter puts it, "Through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience." Obedience and faith, are the necessary conditions to commence a spiritual life; and it can only be maintained as long as these conditions are observed. "If ye CONTINUE in My word then are ye My disciples indeed." Success in a Christian life is conditioned upon the same principles as success in all lines of human endeavor. There is an "If" in all things human. If one commences to study and continues, he will become educated; if one gets in harmony with the laws of commerce and so continues, he will be successful in business; if a

farmer sows he will reap ; if nature's laws are obeyed we get the blessings of nature, while if they are broken we get the cursings of nature ; and so there is a condition attached to obtaining any desirable thing in this life. The pathway of life is strewn with wrecks and failures, because the " If " of Jesus has not been observed, and because the similar " If " in all God's laws has been ignored.

Because of this failure there are but few who maintain an unbroken walk with God from the time of conversion, even of those who keep up the form of Godliness ; not to speak of the many who give up the form as well as the power. How many are there who keep as good an experience as they had on that happy day when Jesus washed their sins away ? Now there must be a cause for this sad condition of things. It may be that many who profess to be converted never were so in fact, and this may account for the majority who seem to go back into the world ; but what about that large number of persons, of whose conversion there can be no doubt ; who still have some desire to serve Christ, and keep up the form, but who have lost their spirituality and power ? These are

backsliders to all intents and purposes. The great problem which I am now to solve is, "How to keep converted"? How to have the same joy, confidence and communion with God all through life, that we had on the day of our conversion? Jesus solves that problem.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ IF YE CONTINUE IN MY WORD.”

Continuance in the word of Jesus.—Saved by faith and kept by faith.—Must take Jesus through the Holy Ghost as our absolute teacher.—Must take Him for our light or knowledge.—Must not take the letter of the Bible.—Bible principles always true, but the letter often not applicable.—We must take Jesus as the Bread of Life.—“ He that cometh to Me shall never hunger.”—We are not kept saved by works.—“ Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? ”—God’s children cry for bread and are given stones.—Must take Jesus for our joy.—Must not depend upon feeling.—The Holy Spirit is the never-failing supply of all spiritual blessings.

“ If ye continue in My *word*, then are ye My disciples indeed.” Every person who commences to be a disciple, does so by believing the word of Jesus, resting nothing in his own merits, depending nothing upon good works, but risking his all upon Jesus’ word, and receiving his all of salvation in the same way. If a man continues in the same faith, and does not expect to perfect himself by any of his own efforts, but simply continues

in the word of Jesus, then he is a disciple indeed, and never backslides. Now, to continue in Christ's word is to obey His teaching and to take *Him* through the Holy Spirit as our *absolute* teacher.

We must take Him for our light or knowledge. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world, he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." It was prophesied of Him, that He should open the eyes of the blind, and that through Him the people who sat in darkness should see a great light. In other words, Christ dispels spiritual ignorance, and imparts such knowledge to His followers, on all matters which concern them, as is equivalent to giving sight to a blind man, or to a great light in a dark place. I am fully convinced, that if this elementary spiritual truth were taught to converts, a large percentage of backsliding would be avoided. But how does He impart the necessary knowledge or shed the full-orbed light upon the pathway of the young convert? All must admit that the recorded words of Christ in the New Testament, are the chief means by which He makes known His will to this generation.

In the Bible we are told of the true light from which we are to get knowledge and understanding; and we can get information of that light from no other source. But the Bible is not itself that light; Jesus claims that He is the Light of the world, and the Light that lighteth every man that comes into the world. The Bible is from God, and all its gracious principles are for the guidance of mankind; it is rich in precept, and in example of men filled with God; it is our only source of information of the plan of salvation; and contains the only account we have of the birth, the life, the teaching, the death, the resurrection, the ascension of Jesus, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But after saying all we can about the Bible, it is still the moon, and not the Sun; its light is a borrowed light from the Sun of Righteousness, whose rays not only flood that blessed book, but also illumine the minds of all who continue in the word of Jesus, and are His disciples indeed.

He who would continue in Christ's word, must take the Holy Spirit of Jesus as His light, and not the letter of the Bible, only as the Spirit reveals what that letter meaneth

to him in his circumstances. All Bible truth was not meant to be applicable to everybody always and everywhere. Its principles are always applicable, but the carrying out of its letter never was meant to be. On one occasion Christ said to his disciples, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his coat and buy one," while at another time he said, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," and both statements uttered under different circumstances were doubtless eminently wise. But no man can carry a sword and not carry one at the same time, so that if one command is kept the other will be broken. It cannot be contended that the strict letter of the Sermon on the Mount was intended to be carried out always by everybody. For if so, if a man takes away your coat, you must give him your cloak also ; and if he compels you to walk a mile, you must walk with him two ; and if he smites you on one cheek, you must turn to him the other also. These and other similar Scriptures, can only give light to the individual as they are illuminated to his mind by the Holy Spirit. They contain the principle, that a man must hold himself in

readiness to do anything, no matter how apparently absurd, if he should be so instructed by God. And so when a man habitually studies the Scriptures in the expectation of having them explained to him by the Spirit, he is then abiding in the word of Jesus, and is a disciple indeed. But young converts are erroneously referred to the Scriptures, as if in the last analysis truth and duty were inherent in them.

Common sense, reason, the advice of Christian people, are also recommended in such a way, as though the supreme light on the path of duty were contained in any or all of them; but they are not as fully instructed in the literal personality of the Holy Spirit who dwells in their bodies, and walks and talks with all who recognize Him; and whose special business it is "To guide them into all truth," and to reveal all things to them as fast as it is necessary. "If ye continue in My *word*, then are ye My disciples indeed," and His word is "I am the Light of the world, and he that followeth *Me* shall not walk in darkness."

We must also take Jesus as the Bread of Life; that is, as the sustainer of spiritual

life, if we would continue in His word. He said: "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." I think there will be no dispute theoretically on this proposition ; but many may think they teach this doctrine who really teach a doctrine of works. More may think they believe it, who are really depending upon works to keep up their spiritual life.

This heresy of keeping up spiritual life by works, crept in among the Galatians, and Paul addresses them : " O foolish Galatians, are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit are ye now made perfect by the flesh ? " Justification by faith, received and continued by faith, was the key-note of the Reformation, and the Protestant churches are the depositories of this vital truth ; but I lift the warning voice and declare that we are drifting away from this great doctrine. Young converts catch the pernicious heresy, and put the yoke of the law upon their necks, and then their experiences confirm the Scriptures, " By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight," and thus they fall from grace ; for " Christ is

become of no effect unto you, whoever of you are justified by the law ; ye are fallen from grace."

A system of law as rigid as the Mosaic ceremonial law, is bound about the necks of Christians ; the changes are rung upon the note, Do, Do, Do. The Bible must be read so often, private prayer must be attended to so many times a day ; if he is the head of a family it will be sinful ever to omit family worship ; if he does not attend prayer meeting or public service with punctilious regularity, he will displease God ; and a hundred and one other rules are given, and he is tied hand and foot with rules which impede his spiritual progress, and thus these rules frustrate the very purpose they seek to accomplish.

God's children cry for bread and they are given stones. They ask for fish and are fed serpents. Blind guides lead the blind and they all fall into the ditch. " Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear."

A Christian will always maintain good works, but it will be done as a matter of

love, or privilege or revelation, and not of law, except it be the law of the Spirit. To live a Christian life after the pattern of some teachers is very slavery, and few hold out faithful; but Christ says His yoke is easy and His burden is light, and only the young convert who abides in this word of His becomes a disciple indeed. We must also take Jesus as our joy and complete satisfier. By not doing this, but expecting joy and satisfaction from other sources, many have erred from the faith.

Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." If we would keep converted we must abide in these words of Jesus. But many look to their experience, that is, their emotions, for satisfaction; and as these are a variable quantity, and never according to their ideal, they do not obtain satisfaction, and therefore have unfulfilled longings and aspirations which are never realized.

The spiritual power of a religious meeting is often gauged by the amount of visible feeling manifested. If some person gets pathetic in discourse or experience, and if emotion and tears are manifested; that is taken as a sign of deepening spirituality. Whereas, necessarily, it is no sign at all, for there is more emotion manifested, and there are more tears shed in the theatre than in the Church. And through this kind of teaching young converts soon begin to gauge their piety by their feelings, and as a consequence backslide.

Now the well of water that Jesus puts in the soul, which is such a satisfying portion, is the Holy Spirit, for it is recorded, “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him would receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified).”

The Holy Ghost is the Person, who rep-

resents in the soul of the believer, God the Father and God the Son ; and He it is who carries out the promises of Jesus. Like a well, which is a source of water supply ; so He is the never-failing supply of all spiritual blessings. He is not feeling nor a sentiment, nor an emotion of any kind, as some practically think, and teach ; but He is a Person, though a Spiritual Person ; nor does His presence necessarily involve conscious feeling or emotion, any more than the personal presence of any other person involves such a state.

The word of Jesus is in effect, " I am going away, but I will send you another Comforter, and He shall abide with you all the time." Now we must abide in Jesus' word, and recognize the presence of the Divine Being, whom He has sent to tabernacle with us. Young converts being thus taught, and realizing this personal God the Spirit in them and around them, will never backslide and will always have satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DISCIPLES WHO KNOW THE TRUTH.

“Ye shall become disciples indeed.”—Continuous fellowship with Jesus makes perfect characters.—Christians whom the Devil cannot trip up.—Most people who backslide do so at first through spiritual ignorance.—The Devil is the accuser of the brethren.—Those who abide in Jesus’ word are not ignorant of Satan’s devices.—The Holy Spirit is the Revealer of the truth on all personal matters.—“When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall Guide you into all truth.”—“He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you : All things that the Father hath are Mine.”—Thus the truth concerning all things which affect obedience, and blessedness, is revealed without any limitation.—There is no distinction between secular and spiritual.—The one thing necessary is to abide in Christ’s word.

“*Ye shall become disciples indeed.*” This expression of Jesus I take to mean, that continuance in fellowship with Him will establish our characters, confirm us in the faith, and perfect us in all the graces ; for “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." We shall be His disciples indeed, knowing the mind of our Master, and doing the perfect will of God on earth as the angels do it in heaven. We shall be in constant communion with Him, knowing His voice; for He said, "And the sheep hear His voice. . . . and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers."

We shall be stalwart Christians, established in the faith, and not carried about by every wind of doctrine; Christians whom the Devil can never trip up. The majority of persons who backslide, do so accidentally, or ignorantly, and not of set purpose; and in the first place do not sin at all, in any sense so as to grieve God or cut them off from Him; the Devil, "The accuser of the brethren," only makes them think so; and then they cast away their confidence and sin in reality. But abiding in Christ's word, they become disciples indeed, and are not ignorant of Satan's devices; permitting no person to condemn them or to approve them, but the Holy Spirit; for it is His exclusive province to convince of sin and of

righteousness; that is, to convince the Christian, as well as the worldling, when he does wrong, and to tell him when he does right.

Another result of abiding in Christ's word is, we shall know the truth.

Spiritual ignorance is to be credited with more backslidings and declensions in religion a hundred-fold, than intellectual ignorance. It is not ignorance of the letter of the Bible which is the supreme lack of Christians; but it is a lack of knowing the truth as it concerns the individual; the spiritual, personal, practical truth. The want of this knowledge is the great and crowning evil of modern Christian experience. Essential truth is not so much the manner or mode of God's existence, or which of the various theories of the atonement is true; it is not the nature or duration of future punishment, or the nature of biblical inspiration, or whether all the parts of the Bible are equally inspired; nor is it the question of whether a second blessing is necessary for the Christian, important as all these questions are; but truth in the way Christ means it, is *knowing the mind of God*,

and especially upon all questions which concern the individual.

The promise of Christ is, that the disciples indeed, shall know the truth. He means that we shall know the truth concerning the problems that are now, or ever will revolve in our mind; that we shall be freed from all anxious care. Christ says in effect, "I will show you the mind and will of God in all matters that affect you. I will open your eyes both to duty, and to privilege, as it affects heaven as well as earth; in short ye shall know the truth concerning all things that you either ought to know or that is good for you to know." "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."

Jesus said to His disciples on this question; "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth." That He clearly meant all truth, without any limitation, is seen by what He states further along in the same chapter; here it is, "He shall glorify Me for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine and shall

show it unto you." Thus it appears that the Holy Spirit is to show the Christian the truth in all matters that belong to Jesus; and Jesus possesses all things that are possessed by Almighty God. That is, Jesus possesses and controls all there is of matter and mind. "He made all things, and by Him all things consist." These are the things of Jesus, the Spirit is to reveal. This takes in health, business, pleasures, family, education, duty, church, and every other conceivable and inconceivable thing.

Some teachers limit the truth that Christ shall cause the Christian to know, to what they call spiritual truth, meaning thereby truth pertaining to forgiveness of sins, adoption, assurance and kindred things; and they deny that He will teach anything about what are called secular subjects. The fact is that everything in which the Christian is interested has a bearing upon his spiritual life, so that all things are spiritual. If the Holy Spirit does not shine upon business, upon social and family affairs, in fact upon all the affairs of life, then I declare it is impossible to continue a Christian. It is upon the rock of this pernicious

teaching, limiting the power of the Holy Ghost, that young converts make shipwreck of faith.

My reader, if you abide in Christ's word, you shall know the truth in reference to *all things*, in such a way, that you will always know how to act in every emergency, so as to please God, and satisfy yourself. This is the wonderful promise of Jesus, and the only thing needful to make it real to you, and to prove the truth of the statement, is to acknowledge the literal presence of Jesus with you, through the Holy Spirit, and simply trust Him to carry out His words ; for said He, " And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Cut yourself loose from all the vain traditions of men, and be conscious of the personal presence of God the Spirit and rely wholly upon Him. He will speak to your heart and mind, and will teach you all things as you need, or are able to bear teaching ; and never did skilful teacher give his lessons in better proportion as to your capacity, and more in harmony with your eternal needs, than does the wise and sympathetic Jesus ; for " He knoweth our

frame, and He remembereth that we are dust.

No parent was ever more truly indulgent to a child; no betrothed was ever half so fond of the company of his lover, and no teacher was ever more anxious for the education of his pupil, than Jesus is. If you unconsciously, or even forgetfully blunder in your lessons, He will not turn you out of His school, nor will He as much as frown upon you. Nothing but sin will grieve Him, and that He forgives the moment it is repented of; and no act is sin to the disciple of Jesus, but a known violation of the will of God. And hence it follows, any sincere person may continue in His word, and learn to know the truth about everything as it is in Jesus.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SPIRITUAL FREEDOM.

“ If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”—We are free from falling.—It is not can not, but will not fall.—A Spirit-led Christian fights a winning battle.—We are free from dread and fear.—Without anxious thought.—We look forward to the future, for time and eternity, with glad anticipations.—We are free from doubt, even of ourselves, because we are in His keeping.—Free from condemnation because made free from sin.

The final result of abiding in Christ's word is, we shall be made free.

Jesus said, “ If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

We are free from falling. There never comes a time, when a man is free from falling, considered abstractly; that is, when he *may not* fall; or when he loses his free agency and becomes a mere machine, and is *compelled* to remain true to Christ.

Jesus the lover of our souls values our love all the more because we love Him and serve

Him from choice ; that is for loving Him when we have the power not to do so. It is impossible that there is a moral agent in the universe who could not turn his back upon God if he so desired. And yet all those who do not want to fall but continue in Jesus' word, are as practically free from falling as if they could not. An honest man has the abstract power to steal, but it is certain he will not do so on account of the fact that he is honest. I *could* commit murder, but I am as sure I will not, as if I could not, and so I feel perfectly free from that danger.

In the same way, a Christian who knows enough to obey the word of Jesus, in the matter of taking the Holy Ghost as his teacher, is certainly free from the danger of falling. He can say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day."

A Spirit-led Christian does not fight an uncertain battle, nor run a race of doubtful victory. He is not as a man walking a tight rope, balancing himself with each step for fear of falling. He does not serve a tyrant who stands with drawn sword, ready to cut

off the head of his wretched subjects for each manifestation of human frailty, nor does he live with cringing fear of at last being cast out; for his continuance in the school of Christ has taught him that, the Lord's yoke is easy and His burden is light.

We are also free from dread and fear of all kinds. Companionship with Jesus, real personal acquaintance with Him; the consciousness of the indwelling Holy Spirit and fellowship with the Father; make the past like a blissful dream, but we know it to be a reality; while the present brings such a fulfilment of God's promises, that we are glad to have a chance to trust Him for the future. Without anxious thought or foreboding care, glad even not to know what the future will develop, except by faith to know, that the highest good possible awaits us; and therefore with confidence and lively hope, we greet each new day, knowing that He who has delivered, will deliver; and so we live out in glorious reality, the teachings of the ever adorable Jesus. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . . Behold the fowls of the air; for

they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they. . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

And as we are free from doubt and fear concerning time; so likewise there is nothing to fear for eternity. God will be the same loving Father after death as before; and those who know Him here, will experience no shock, when they meet Him there. Death, that King of Terrors to the wicked and the half-hearted, has ceased to be any terror to those who walk with God. They have the experience each day, "O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory?"

We are also free from doubt. And not only in the way in which that expression is generally used, but in the sense that, having implicit confidence in the words of Jesus, concerning the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we no longer have any doubt of ourselves. That slavish teaching which bids Christians doubt their own integrity, and to believe their hearts are impure, even though their

consciousness is to the contrary, does not enter into the experience of those who continue in the word of Jesus. Many sincere persons there are who so doubt themselves, that through the unscriptural doctrines which they have learned they tincture their holiest thoughts with sin, and stand in doubt of their noblest motives, and are thus always in bondage. This is at once dishonoring to God, going back on the promises of Jesus, and a disparagement of the Holy Ghost who alone can convince of sin. "But whom the Son maketh free are free indeed," from this form of doubt.

And giving all praise to the wonder-working power of God, we are free from sin. The New Testament standard of a Christian man is one who does the whole will of God. As I have intimated elsewhere, sin in a sense to bring guilt, must be an avoidable act; for God does not condemn for acts over which His children have no control; and "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." To

be free from sin is to obey God ; it is to walk in the Spirit, and thus not fulfil the lusts of the flesh ; and the converse of this statement is true ; to walk in the Spirit, and thus obey God, is to be free from sin. Here then is Christ's plan for keeping converted, " If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And as Peter says, " Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure ; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall."

To sum up the whole matter I would say that, the real secret of walking with God in the full-orbed light of justification, is in Christ's word. " I will send you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

" Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His last farewell,
A Guide--a Comforter bequeathed,
With us to dwell.

He came in tongues of living flame
To teach, subdue ;
All-powerful as the wind He came,
As unseen too.

He comes His grace to impart ;
A willing guest,
While He can find one humble heart
Wherein to rest.

He breathes, that gentle voice we hear
As breeze of even ;
That checks each fault, and calms each fear,
And speaks of Heaven.

And all the good that we possess,
His gift we own ;
Yea, every thought of holiness,
And victory won.

Blest Spirit of strength and grace,
Who weakness cures ;
Thou mak'st our hearts thy dwelling-place,
And victory insures."

CHAPTER XXX.

SATISFACTION.

Popularly supposed that a condition of satisfaction is impossible.—This popular view is unscriptural and unphilosophical.—Satisfaction is a present tense state of the mind.—A man should be satisfied with each day's work if he has done his best.—A student should always have the satisfaction of being faithful in his studies.—A healthy person should start each meal satisfied with his hunger, and rise from the table satisfied because his appetite has been appeased.—A man not satisfied, is a man dissatisfied and discontented, and a practical disbeliever in God.—Should a man ever be satisfied with his moral and spiritual attainments?—If God only demands that which is reasonable, it can be accomplished, and when done we should be satisfied.—A Christian has no right to be dissatisfied with anything but sin, but he has no right to sin.—A dissatisfied man is a sinner.

It is popularly supposed that a condition of perfect satisfaction is not possible in this life.

I heard a minister of more than ordinary ability, both as a reasoner and speaker, say that if he were to hear a man profess to be perfectly satisfied that he should consider him either a fool or a knave.

It is said a man may be satisfied with God and the plan of salvation, but that no man ought to be satisfied with himself, either as to his character or attainments, no matter what his achievements may be in either particular. It is supposed that the best of us could have done better than we have done, and that there is so much to learn about ourselves and our fellows, about God and duty, that no sane man can be conscious of these things and be perfectly satisfied. This is the popular view, but I think it is wrong, and contrary both to the Scriptures and to true philosophy.

Satisfaction is a present tense state of the mind, having no necessary reference either to the past or the future, although it may be based upon both.

A man may have work enough to last him a year, and yet may make such progress with it the first day that at the close of the day, he is absolutely satisfied with that day's work, and the fact that he has three hundred and sixty-four days' work ahead of him, may be one of the factors in his satisfaction.

A student, fully absorbed in his studies, ought to so study, that each day, he is re-

warded with the satisfaction of having done his duty, and made all the progress possible for him.

A person in good health and with a good appetite ought to get up from each meal perfectly satisfied so far as his appetite is concerned, notwithstanding the fact that he expects to be hungry again for the next meal. In fact, when he sits down to eat he is all the more satisfied because he is hungry, and all things being equal he keeps satisfied while the meal progresses and so continues at its close.

The man not satisfied is the man dissatisfied, and he is the selfish man, or the glutton or the miser, and a disbeliever of the Bible in every instance, in a greater or less degree.

A man who believes in a good God, and is himself a good man, must of necessity be a satisfied man.

"Yes, this is all very well," says the objector, "but what about moral and spiritual duties? Can a man ever be satisfied with himself in these particulars?" It seems to me perfectly clear that he can be, and therefore he ought to be. The God of some people is a hard taskmaster; there never was a

slave-driver so exacting as He is ; He binds heavy burdens upon weak shoulders and demands " Bricks without straw " ; He gives problems of impossible solution, and then punishes His subjects for not solving them. This is certainly the God that many people believe in, so they are kept on the gridiron of their own dissatisfaction and roasting on the fire of the unreasonable requirements of their God.

This, however, is not the Bible God as taught by Jesus Christ, for His " Yoke is easy, and His burden light." " As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." " He knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are but dust," and so His requirements are not hard, but easy. A man who does not obey the reasonable commands of God, made in his own interest at that, is a wicked man, for " His commandments are not grievous, but joyous, and in keeping of them there is great reward." One of the rewards is perfect and constant satisfaction, for said Jesus, " He that cometh to Me shall never hunger and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

A Christian man has no right to be dis-

satisfied with anything but sin, but he has no right to sin, nor is there any need of sinning, for Jesus was manifested to take away our sins.

If of course one believes sin to be a necessity and that he constantly does sin, then he cannot but be dissatisfied. I once heard a successful Evangelist, voice a popular sentiment, when he said, "Those who lived nearest God were the most conscious of their sins;" and he quoted Paul's experience to the effect that in the beginning he started out with the experience of a humble saint, saying that he was "Less than the least of all saints"; but it seems that Paul then began a downward career, and soon confessed that he was "Not worthy to be called an Apostle," and he finished up in his old age by saying he was a very bad man; or at least he used the words that he was "The chief of sinners"; and if he means what he said, to be his experience at the time he used that language, it of course means that he was a very bad man at that time. Such teaching, however, is a burlesque on Christianity, a slander on Paul, and a libel on Christian experience, as it is a disgrace to a

Christian teacher. That is to say, this characterization would be true, if those who so teach knew what they were saying, and actually meant what they said.

I must, however, in charity suppose that they are better than their creeds, and do not intend to teach what their language logically means.

If what they say is true, then the better we are the worse we know ourselves to be. The man most trusted by God and living nearest to Him, is conscious that he is disloyal to God ; that notwithstanding all God has done for him he is still a bad man, for a sinner is a bad man, although this is a bald way of putting it. It means that the most holy man is unholy, that no matter how a man may try, that he cannot even by the aid of the Almighty power of God be perfectly true ; that in fact the nearer he puts himself to God by these his endeavors, the more he will be conscious he sins daily in thought, word or deed. It means that God demands more than the best of men can give ; that is, He demands the impossible and then blames his most faithful follower because he cannot accomplish it.

I am glad that I worship a different kind of God, one whom I find to be a loving and kind Father, a Master so reasonable and easy to please that if I were to violate His will, or sin against Him, I would consider myself a scoundrel of the deepest dye, deserving the last penalty of His righteous law.

And their creed to the contrary, I must believe in charity, that in reality the good men who teach such nonsense, are the same as I am ; for if they are as they paint themselves, I should be afraid to associate or do business with them. A man who is untrue to God in any degree, is to the same extent untrue to his fellows and cannot be trusted.

If, however, their teaching is born of actual present experience, I have good news to tell them ; I have a remedy to offer, a gospel to preach to them which will thoroughly purge them of the dread disease of sin, and make them new creatures, holy, pure and undefiled, constantly well pleasing to God, and satisfactory to themselves.

CHAPTER XXXI.

INFIDELITY TO THE BIBLE.

But comparatively few are controlled by the Unseen.—The Bible is not actually believed.—The Bible a record and a picture of the supernatural.—The sin of the Jews was that they would not be controlled direct by God.—Judging from their actions, their belief in God was but a creed.—Jesus was governed by the supernatural and the Unseen, and He is our example.—Those who deny that a Christian may be guided, consciously and direct, by God, are infidels.—The heart of Christianity is supernatural guidance, and those who deny it are materialists.—Conscious sin is the reason why people want to hide from God.—Tendency to make a creed to fit the experience, instead of making both come up to God's standard in the Bible.—“Like priest like people.”—The majority of Christians have never been taught the doctrine of guidance by the Unseen.—The working creed of one generation, becomes the actual creed of the next generation.—The sole scientific test that the supernatural promises of the Bible are true, is to experience them.—If they *cannot* be experienced they are not true.

How few really believe in the supernatural or have their lives controlled by the Unseen! Multitudes of people, who talk unctuously about the Bible and Jesus and think they are loyal to both, are at most only loyal

to their *creed* concerning the Bible and Jesus.

The Bible is a record and a picture of the supernatural. The writers of the Bible claim that God has a way to communicate direct with the human soul, and they urge the people to listen and obey. The sin of God's ancient people the Jews, was that they would not be governed by Him direct. They wanted gods they could see and handle, they wanted a king they could look at, and were not contented with the invisible and almighty King. They went down to Egypt for help, not seeing the invisible God with His infinite resources right at hand. They were really materialists, taking but little practical stock in the Unseen, their creed to the contrary; and for their infidelity, God through His prophets often reproved them. They believed in Jehovah as a creed, or as a pious sentiment, and would no doubt have resented the charge of being infidels; but, then as now, actions speak louder than words, and their actions proved that they did not really believe in the Almighty power of the invisible God.

Jesus acted out in life what the Bible teaches. His life was governed by the Un-

seen. He claimed to know, and do His Father's will. Jesus was not guided by the Bible nor by the Church, nor by what is called common sense; He was guided, at first hand, by God, and in this He showed at once His common sense and His loyalty to the Bible and the Church.

Persons in these days who do not believe in God talking to and guiding His people, individually and direct, are infidels; they neither believe the Bible nor Jesus. The very heart of Christianity, is the supernatural doctrine that a man may know and converse with God, that a man may speak to God "Face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Who doubts this, is an infidel, no matter what his profession.

The outstanding fact in the life of Jesus, was His fellowship with God. In this fellowship, was the very heart of His spirituality, as it is now of Christianity, for this is what Jesus came to demonstrate, and teach to His followers. One of the marvellous things, is that any person with the Bible in his hands, and with Jesus before him in history, should deny the very central truth taught by the Bible and demonstrated in

the life of Jesus; for Christianity without the direct and conscious guidance of God, is fire without warmth, and day without light; it is gravitation without attraction, it is light without the Sun, or "The play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out."

There are, however, some causes that may be pointed out, which probably contribute to this folly and blindness. There is the old story of wrong-doing, and then the attempt, either consciously or unconsciously, to hide from God as Adam and Eve did. A person who knows he is committing sin, even though it may be the most venial, will want to hide from the personal God. There can be no fellowship between darkness and light, and the least sin puts out the light in the human soul, that is, drives the living God away.

On the other hand, there are certain acts known to be wrong, and supposed to be unavoidable, that drive some pious people to the Bible and the Church, as a sort of refuge for their souls or balm for their consciences. At least, zealous Christian workers, who claim to be lovers of the Bible, confess that they do sin all the time, and think the confession to be a sign of piety, and these are generally

they, who deny that God in these days talks direct to His people. Such Christians do not want the actual living God to have direct contact and converse with them.

It certainly is a fact, that sin makes a man want to get rid of God, and then he makes his theory fit his desire and puts God off as far as possible, although he may still be very religious. The least habitual sin blinds the eyes of the soul, so it cannot see God; and a person who thus sins straightway conforms his doctrine to his experience, and teaches that God cannot now be seen, and heard. If he happens to be a minister, then "Like priest like people," and "The blind lead the blind, and they both fall into the ditch."

The majority of professed Christians, however, have never heard the doctrine of direct Divine guidance taught. They have learned practically nothing of getting light from God, and so, comparatively few persons enjoy the conscious direction of God, and thus many really Godly people, it may be, are unwittingly infected with the infidelity referred to in this chapter.

The working creed of one generation of

Christians becomes the actual creed of the next generation, and this is a very great evil, for creeds, unlike clothes, were not intended to be made to fit the wearer, but the reverse. God's standard cannot be brought down to fit the man, but the man must bring himself up to fit the standard.

The sole scientific test that the supernatural statements of the Bible are true, is to experience them. Let me quote a few of these statements. "But the Comforter . . . shall teach you all things." "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" What proof is there for these promises and statements short of the conscious experience of God in us, and with us, and teaching us? If these things cannot be experienced, then it follows that the Bible is not true and its promises cannot be depended upon.

I beg all sincere persons to read the Bible again, and especially the *life* of Jesus, with the doctrine here taught in your mind, and as sure as light is not darkness, so surely

will you be convinced that it is your privilege to receive the Holy Spirit, and that henceforth you may be indwelt of God, and always have the consciousness that you are being Divinely directed, and that, by God's Almighty power, you are enabled to do the will of God on earth as the Angels do it in Heaven.

